FRONTISPIECE

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PAUL & VIRGINIA,

translated from the French of

Bernardin Saint Pierre,

with

Original Sonnets,

BY

Helen Maria Williams.

Fourth Edition.

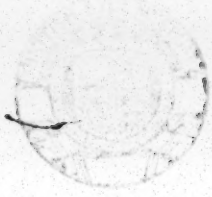
Vide Page 3.

Designed & Engraved by H. Richter.

LONDON:

Printed for Vernor and Hood

N. 31 Poultry 1799.



PAUL

AND

VIRGINIA.

TRANSLATED

FROM THE FRENCH

OF

BERNARDIN SAINT-PIERRE;

BY

Helen Maria Williams,

Author of Letters on the French Revolution,
Julia a Novel, Poems, &c.

With Six Plates, engraved by Richter.

Fourth Edition.

LONDON:
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PREFACE.

THE following Tranſlation of *Paul and Virginia* was written at Paris, amidſt the Horrors of *Robeſpierre's* Tyranny. During that gloomy Epocha it was difficult to find Occupations which might cheat the Days of Calamity of their weary Length. Society had vaniſhed; and, amidſt the minute Vexations of Jacobinical Deſpotiſm, which, while it murdered in *Maſs*, perſecuted in Detail, the Reſources of writing, and even reading, were encompaſſed with Danger. The Reſearches of domiciliary Viſits had already com-

 pelled

pelled me to commit to the Flames a Manuſcript Volume, where I had traced the political Scenes of which I had been a Witneſs, with the Colouring of their firſt Impreſſions on my Mind, with thoſe freſh Tints that fade from Recollection: and ſince my Pen, accuſtomed to follow the Impulſe of my Feelings, could only have drawn at that fatal Period, thoſe Images of Deſolation and Deſpair which haunted my Imagination, and dwelt upon my Heart, writing was forbidden Employment. Even reading had its Perils; for Books had ſometimes ariſtocratical Inſignia, and ſometimes counter-revolutionary Alluſions: and when the Adminiſtrators of Police happened to think the Writer a Conſpirator, they puniſhed

puniſhed the Reader as his Accomplice.

In this Situation I gave myſelf the Taſk of employing a few Hours every Day in tranſlating the charming little Novel of *Bernardin St. Pierre*, entitled '*Paul and Virginia*;' and I found the moſt ſoothing Relief in wandering from my own gloomy Reflections to thoſe enchanting Scenes of the *Mauritius*, which he has ſo admirably deſcribed. I alſo compoſed a few Sonnets adapted to the peculiar Productions of that Part of the Globe, which are interſperſed in the Work. Some, indeed, are loſt, as well as a Part of the Tranſlation, which I have ſince ſupplied, having been ſent to the Municipality

nicipality of Paris, in order to be examined as Engliſh Papers; where they ſtill remain, mingled with revolutionary Placards, Motions, and Harangues; and are not likely to be reſtored to my Poſſeſſion.

With reſpect to the Tranſlation, I can only hope to deſerve the humble Merit of not having deformed the Beauty of the Original. I have, indeed, taken one Liberty with my Author, which it is fit I ſhould acknowledge, that of omitting ſeveral Pages of general Obſervations, which, however excellent in themſelves, would be paſſed over with Impatience by the Engliſh Reader, when they interrupt the pathetic Narrative. In this Reſpect the two Nations

Nations ſeem to change Characters; and, while the ſerious and reflecting Engliſhman requires, in Novel Writing as well as on the Theatre, a rapid Succeſſion of Incidents, much Buſtle and Stage Effect, without ſuffering the Author to appear himſelf, and ſtop the Progreſs of the Story; the gay and reſtleſs Frenchman liſtens attentively to long philoſophical Reflections, while the Cataſtrophe of the Drama hangs in Suſpenſe.

My laſt poetical Productions (the Sonnets which are interſperſed in this Work) may perhaps be found even more imperfect than my earlier Compoſitions; ſince, after a long exile from England, I can ſcarcely flatter myſelf

that my Ear is become more attuned to the Harmony of a Language, with the Sounds of which it is ſeldom gladdened; or that my poetical Taſte is improved by living in a Country where Arts have given Place to Arms. But the Public will, perhaps, receive with Indulgence a Work written under ſuch peculiar Circumſtances; not compoſed in the calm of literary Leiſure, or in purſuit of literary Fame, but amidſt the Turbulence of the moſt cruel Senſations, and in order to eſcape awhile from overwhelming Miſery.

HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

PARIS, JUNE, 1795.

PAUL AND VIRGINIA.

ON the eaſtern coaſt of the mountain which riſes above Port Louis in the Mauritius, upon a piece of land bearing the marks of former cultivation, are ſeen the ruins of two ſmall cottages. Thoſe ruins are ſituated near the centre of a valley, formed by immenſe rocks, and which opens only towards the north. On the left riſes the mountain called the Height of Diſcovery, from whence the eye marks the diſtant ſail when it firſt touches the verge of the horizon, and whence the ſignal is given when a veſſel approaches the iſland. At the foot of this mountain ſtands the town of Port Louis. On the right is formed the road which ſtretches from Port Louis to the Shaddock Grove, where the church, bearing that name, lifts its head, ſurrounded by its avenues of bamboo, in the midſt of a ſpacious plain; and the proſpect terminates in a foreſt extending to the furtheſt bounds of the iſland. The front view preſents the bay, denominated the Bay of the Tomb: a little on the right is ſeen the Cape of Misfortune; and

beyond rolls the expanded ocean, on the ſurface of which appear a few uninhabited iſlands, and, among others, the Point of Endeavour, which reſembles a baſtion built upon the flood.

At the entrance of the valley, which preſents thoſe various objects, the echoes of the mountain inceſſantly repeat the hollow murmurs of the winds that ſhake the neighbouring foreſts, and the tumultuous daſhing of the waves which break at a diſtance upon the cliffs. But near the ruined cottages all is calm and ſtill, and the only objects which there meet the eye are rude ſteep rocks, that riſe like a ſurrounding rampart. Large clumps of trees grow at their baſe, on their rifted ſides, and even on their majeſtic tops, where the clouds ſeem to repoſe. The ſhowers, which their bold points attract, often paint the vivid colours of the rainbow on their green and brown declivities, and ſwell the ſources of the little river which flows at their feet, called the river of Fan-Palms.

Within this incloſure reigns the moſt profound ſilence. The waters, the air, all the elements, are at peace. Scarcely does the echo repeat the whiſpers of

of the palm-trees ſpreading their broad leaves, the long points of which are gently balanced by the winds. A ſoft light illuminates the bottom of this deep valley, on which the ſun only ſhines at noon. But even at break of day the rays of light are thrown on the ſurrounding rocks; and their ſharp peaks, riſing above the ſhadows of the mountain, appear like tints of gold and purple gleaming upon the azure ſky.

To this ſcene I loved to reſort, where I might enjoy at once the richneſs of the extenſive landſcape, and the charm of uninterrupted ſolitude. One day, when I was ſeated at the foot of the cottages, and contemplating their ruins, a man, advanced in years, paſſed near the ſpot. He was dreſſed in the ancient garb of the iſland, his feet were bare, and he leaned upon a ſtaff of ebony: his hair was white, and the expreſſion of his countenance was dignified and intereſting. I bowed to him with reſpect; he returned the ſalutation; and, after looking at me with ſome earneſtneſs, came and placed himſelf upon the hillock where I was ſeated. Encouraged by this mark of confidence, I thus addreſſed him:

"Father, can you tell me to whom thoſe cottages once belonged?" "My ſon," replied the old man, "thoſe heaps of rubbiſh, and that untilled land, were twenty years ago the property of two families who then found happineſs in this ſolitude. Their hiſtory is affecting; but what European, purſuing his way to the Indies, will pauſe one moment to intereſt himſelf in the fate of a few obſcure individuals? What European can picture happineſs to his imagination amidſt poverty and neglect? The curioſity of mankind is only attracted by the hiſtory of the great, and yet from that knowledge little uſe can be derived." "Father," I rejoined, "from your manners and your obſervations, I perceive that you have acquired much experience of human life. If you have leiſure, relate to me, I beſeech you, the hiſtory of the ancient inhabitants of this deſert; and be aſſured, that even the men who are moſt perverted by the prejudices of the world, find a ſoothing pleaſure in contemplating that happineſs which belongs to ſimplicity and virtue." The old man, after a ſhort ſilence, during which he leant his face upon his hands, as if he were trying to recal the images of the paſt, thus began his narration:

"Monſieur

"Monſieur de la Tour, a young man who was a native of Normandy, after having in vain ſolicited a commiſſion in the French army, or ſome ſupport from his own family, at length determined to ſeek his fortune in this iſland, where he arrived in 1726. He brought hither a young woman, whom he loved tenderly, and by whom he was no leſs tenderly beloved. She belonged to a rich and ancient family of the ſame province; but he had married her without fortune, and in oppoſition to the will of her relations, who refuſed their conſent, becauſe he was found guilty of being deſcended from parents who had no claims to nobility. Monſieur de la Tour, leaving his wife at Port Louis, embarked for Madagaſcar, in order to purchaſe a few ſlaves to aſſiſt him in forming a plantation in this iſland. He landed at that unhealthy ſeaſon which commences about the middle of October; and ſoon after his arrival died of the peſtilential fever, which prevails in that country ſix months of the year, and which will for ever baffle the attempts of the European nations to form eſtabliſhments on that fatal ſoil. His effects were ſeized upon by the rapacity of ſtrangers; and his wife, who was pregnant, found herſelf a widow in a country where ſhe had neither credit nor recommenda-

tion, and no earthly poſſeſſion, or rather ſupport, than one negro woman. Too delicate to ſolicit protection or relief from any other man after the death of him whom alone ſhe loved, misfortune armed her with courage, and ſhe reſolved to cultivate with her ſlave a little ſpot of ground, and procure for herſelf the means of ſubſiſtence. In an iſland almoſt a deſert, and where the ground was left to the choice of the ſettler, ſhe avoided thoſe ſpots which were moſt fertile and moſt favourable to commerce; and ſeeking ſome nook of the mountain, ſome ſecret aſylum, where ſhe might live ſolitary and unknown, ſhe bent her way from the town towards thoſe rocks, where ſhe wiſhed to ſhelter herſelf as in a neſt. All ſuffering creatures, from a ſort of common inſtinct, fly for refuge amidſt their pains to haunts the moſt wild and deſolate; as if rocks could form a rampart againſt misfortune; as if the calm of nature could huſh the tumults of the ſoul. That Providence, which lends its ſupport when we aſk but the ſupply of our neceſſary wants, had a bleſſing in reſerve for Madame de la Tour, which neither riches nor greatneſs can purchaſe; this bleſſing was a friend.

The

The ſpot to which Madame de la Tour fled had already been inhabited a year by a young woman of a lively, good-natured, and affectionate diſpoſition. Margaret (for that was her name) was born in Britanny, of a family of peaſants, by whom ſhe was cheriſhed and beloved, and with whom ſhe might have paſſed life in ſimple ruſtic happineſs, if, miſled by the weakneſs of a tender heart, ſhe had not liſtened to the paſſion of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who promiſed her marriage. He ſoon abandoned her, and adding inhumanity to ſeduction, refuſed to enſure a proviſion for the child of which ſhe was pregnant. Margaret then determined to leave for ever her native village, and go, where her fault might be concealed, to ſome colony diſtant from that country where ſhe had loſt the only portion of a poor peaſant girl, her reputation. With ſome borrowed money ſhe purchaſed an old negro ſlave, with whom ſhe cultivated a little ſpot of this canton. Here Madame de la Tour, followed by her negro woman, found Margaret ſuckling her child. Soothed by the ſight of a perſon in a ſituation ſomewhat ſimilar to her own, Madame de la Tour related, in a few words, her paſt condition and her preſent wants. Margaret was deeply affected by the recital; and, more anxious to

excite confidence than eſteem, ſhe confeſſed, without diſguiſe, the errors of which ſhe had been guilty. "As for me," ſaid ſhe, "I deſerve my fate: but you, Madam, you! at once virtuous and unhappy—" And, ſobbing, ſhe offered Madame de la Tour both her hut and her friendſhip. That lady, affected by this tender reception, preſſed her in her arms, and exclaimed, "Ah, ſurely Heaven will put an end to my misfortunes, ſince it inſpires you, to whom I am a ſtranger, with more goodneſs towards me than I have ever experienced from my own relations!"

I knew Margaret; and, although my habitation is a league and a half from hence, in the woods behind that ſloping mountain, I conſidered myſelf as her neighbour. In the cities of Europe a ſtreet, ſometimes even a leſs diſtance, ſeparates families whom nature had united; but in new colonies we conſider thoſe perſons as neighbours from whom we are divided only by woods and mountains: and above all, at that period, when this iſland had little intercourſe with the Indies, neighbourhood alone gave a claim to friendſhip, and hoſpitality towards ſtrangers ſeemed leſs a duty than a pleaſure. No ſooner was I informed

informed that Margaret had found a companion, than I haſtened hither, in the hope of being uſeful to my neighbour and her gueſt.

Madame de la Tour poſſeſſed all thoſe melancholy graces which give beauty additional power, by blending ſympathy with admiration. Her figure was intereſting, and her countenance expreſſed at once dignity and dejection. She appeared to be in the laſt ſtage of her pregnancy. I told them that, for the future intereſts of their children, and to prevent the intruſion of any other ſettler, it was neceſſary they ſhould divide between them the property of this wild ſequeſtered valley, which is nearly twenty acres in extent. They confided that taſk to me, and I marked out two equal portions of land. One includes the higher part of this incloſure, from the peak of that rock buried in clouds, whence ſprings the rapid river of Fan-Palms, to that wide cleft which you ſee on the ſummit of the mountain, and which is called the Cannon's Mouth, from the reſemblance in its form. It is difficult to find a path along this wild portion of incloſure, the ſoil of which is incumbered with fragments of rock, or worn into channels formed by torrents; yet it produces noble trees

trees, and innumerable fountains and rivulets. The other portion of land is compriſed in the plain extending along the banks of the river of Fan-Palms, to the opening where we are now ſeated, from whence the river takes its courſe between thoſe two hills, until it falls into the ſea. You may ſtill trace the veſtiges of ſome meadow-land; and this part of the common is leſs rugged, but not more valuable than the other; ſince in the rainy ſeaſon it becomes marſhy; and in dry weather is ſo hard and unbending, that it will yield only to the ſtroke of the hatchet. When I had thus divided the property, I perſuaded my neighbours to draw lots for their ſeparate poſſeſſions. The higher portion of land became the property of Madame de la Tour; the lower, of Margaret; and each ſeemed ſatisfied with her reſpective ſhare. They intreated me to place their habitations together, that they might at all times enjoy the ſoothing intercourſe of friendſhip, and the conſolation of mutual kind offices. Margaret's cottage was ſituated near the centre of the valley, and juſt on the boundary of her own plantation. Cloſe to that ſpot I built another cottage for the dwelling of Madame de la Tour: and thus the two friends, while they poſſeſſed all the advantages of neighbourhood,

hood, lived on their own property. I myſelf cut paliſades from the mountain, and brought leaves of Fan-Palms from the ſea ſhore, in order to conſtruct thoſe two cottages, of which you can now diſcern neither the entrance nor the roof. Yet, alas! there ſtill remain but too many traces for my remembrance! Time, which ſo rapidly deſtroys the proud monuments of empires, ſeems in this deſert to ſpare thoſe of friendſhip, as if to perpetuate my regrets till the laſt hour of my exiſtence.

Scarcely was her cottage finiſhed, when Madame de la Tour was delivered of a girl. I had been the godfather of Margaret's child, who was chriſtened by the name of Paul. Madame de la Tour deſired me to perform the ſame office for her child alſo, together with her friend, who gave her the name of Virginia. "She will be virtuous," cried Margaret, "and ſhe will be happy. I have only known misfortune by wandering from virtue."

At the time Madame de la Tour recovered, thoſe two little territories had already begun to yield ſome produce, perhaps in a ſmall degree owing to the care which I occaſionally beſtowed on their improvement, but

but far more to the indefatigable labours of the two ſlaves. Margaret's ſlave, who was called Domingo, was ſtill healthy and robuſt, although advanced in years: he poſſeſſed ſome knowledge, and a good natural underſtanding. He cultivated indiſcriminately, on both ſettlements, ſuch ſpots of ground as were moſt fertile, and ſowed whatever grain he thought moſt congenial to each particular ſoil. Where the ground was poor he ſtrewed maize; where it was moſt fruitful he planted wheat, and rice in ſuch ſpots as were marſhy. He threw the ſeeds of gourds and cucumbers at the foot of the rocks, which they loved to climb and decorate with their luxuriant foliage. In dry ſpots he cultivated the ſweet potato; the cotton-tree flouriſhed upon the heights, and the ſugar-cane grew in the clayey ſoil. He reared ſome plants of coffee on the hills, where the grain, although ſmall, is excellent. The plantain-trees, which ſpread their grateful ſhade on the banks of the river, and encircled the cottage, yielded fruit throughout the whole year. And laſtly, Domingo cultivated a few plants of tobacco, to charm away his own cares. Sometimes he was employed in cutting wood for firing from the mountain, ſometimes in hewing pieces of rock within the inclo-

ſure,

ſure, in order to level the paths. He was much attached to Margaret, and not leſs to Madame de la Tour, whoſe negro-woman Mary he had married at the time of Virginia's birth; and he was paſſionately fond of his wife. Mary was born at Madagaſcar, from whence ſhe had brought a few arts of induſtry. She could weave baſkets, and a ſort of ſtuff, with long graſs that grows in the woods. She was active, cleanly, and, above all, faithful. It was her care to prepare their meals, to rear the poultry, and go ſometimes to Port Louis, and ſell the ſuperfluities of theſe little plantations, which were not very conſiderable. If you add to the perſonages I have already mentioned two goats, who were brought up with the children, and a great dog, who kept watch at night, you will have a complete idea of the houſehold as well as of the revenue of thoſe two farms.

Madame de la Tour and her friend were employed from the morning till the evening in ſpinning cotton for the uſe of their families. Deſtitute of all thoſe things which their own induſtry could not ſupply, they walked about their habitations with their feet bare, and ſhoes were a convenience reſerved for Sunday, when at an early hour they attended maſs

at the church of the Shaddock Grove, which you ſee yonder. That church is far more diſtant than Port Louis; yet they ſeldom viſited the town, leſt they ſhould be treated with contempt, becauſe they were dreſſed in the coarſe blue linen of Bengal, which is uſually worn by ſlaves. But is there in that external deference which fortune commands, is there a compenſation for domeſtic happineſs? If they had ſomething to ſuffer from the world, this ſerved but to endear their humble home. No ſooner did Mary and Domingo perceive them from this elevated ſpot, on the road of the Shaddock Grove, than they flew to the foot of the mountain, in order to help them to aſcend. They diſcerned in the looks of their domeſtics that joy which their return inſpired. They found in their retreat neatneſs, independence, all thoſe bleſſings which are the recompenſe of toil, and received thoſe ſervices which have their ſource in affection. United by the tie of ſimilar wants, and the ſympathy of ſimilar misfortunes, they gave each other the tender names of companion, friend, ſiſter. They had but one will, one intereſt, one table. All their poſſeſſions were in common. And if ſometimes a paſſion more ardent than friendſhip, awakened in their hearts the pang of unavailing

anguiſh, a pure religion, united with chaſte manners, drew their affections towards another life; as the trembling flame riſes towards heaven, when it no longer finds any aliment on earth.

Madame de la Tour ſometimes, leaving the houſehold cares to Margaret, wandered out alone; and, amidſt this ſublime ſcenery, indulged that luxury of penſive ſadneſs, which is ſo ſoothing to the mind after the firſt emotions of turbulent ſorrow have ſubſided. Sometimes ſhe poured forth the effuſions of melancholy in the language of verſe; and, although her compoſitions have little poetical merit, they appear to me to bear the marks of genuine ſenſibility. Many of her poems are loſt; but ſome ſtill remain in my poſſeſſion, and a few ſtill hang on my memory. I will repeat to you a ſonnet addreſſed to love.

SONNET

TO LOVE.

Ah, Love! ere yet I knew thy fatal power,
Bright glow'd the colour of my youthful days,
As, on the ſultry zone, the torrid rays
That paint the broad-leav'd plantain's gloſſy bower:
Calm was my boſom as this ſilent hour.
When o'er the deep, ſcarce heard, the zephyr ſtrays,
'Midſt the cool tamarinds indolently plays,
Nor from the orange ſhakes its od'rous flower:
But, ah! ſince Love has all my heart poſſeſt,
That deſolated heart what ſorrows tear?
Diſturb'd, and wild as ocean's troubled breaſt,
When the hoarſe tempeſt of the night is there!
Yet my complaining ſpirit aſks no reſt;
This bleeding boſom cheriſhes deſpair.

The tender and ſacred duties which nature impoſed became a ſource of additional happineſs to thoſe affectionate mothers, whoſe mutual friendſhip acquired new ſtrength at the ſight of their children, alike the offspring of unhappy love. They delighted to place their infants together in the ſame bath, to nurſe them in the ſame cradle, and ſometimes changed the maternal boſom at which they received nouriſhment, as if to blend with the ties of friendſhip that inſtinctive affection which this act of friendſhip produces. "My friend," cried Madame de la Tour, "we ſhall each of us have two children, and each of our children will have two mothers." As two buds which remain on two trees of the ſame kind, after the tempeſt has broken all their branches, produce more delicious fruit, if each ſeparated from the maternal ſtem, be grafted on the neighbouring tree; ſo thoſe two children, deprived of all other ſupport, imbibed ſentiments more tender than thoſe of ſon and daughter, brother and ſiſter, when exchanged at the breaſt of thoſe who had given them birth. While they were yet in the cradle, their mothers talked of their marriage; and this proſpect of conjugal felicity, with which they ſoothed their own cares, often called forth the tears of bitter regret.

The misfortunes of one mother had ariſen from having neglected marriage, thoſe of the other from having ſubmitted to its laws: one had been made unhappy by attempting to raiſe herſelf above her humble condition of life, the other by deſcending from her rank. But they found conſolation in reflecting that their more fortunate children, far from the cruel prejudices of Europe, thoſe prejudices which poiſon the moſt precious ſources of our happineſs, would enjoy at once the pleaſures of love, and the bleſſings of equality.

Nothing could exceed the attachment which thoſe infants already diſplayed for each other. If Paul complained, his mother pointed to Virginia; and at that ſight he ſmiled, and was appeaſed. If any accident befel Virginia, the cries of Paul gave notice of the diſaſter; and then Virginia would ſuppreſs her complaints when ſhe found that Paul was unhappy. When I came hither, I uſually found them quite naked, which is the cuſtom of this country, tottering in their walk, and holding each other by the hands and under the arms, as we repreſent the conſtellation of the twins. At night theſe infants often refuſed to be ſeparated, and were found lying in

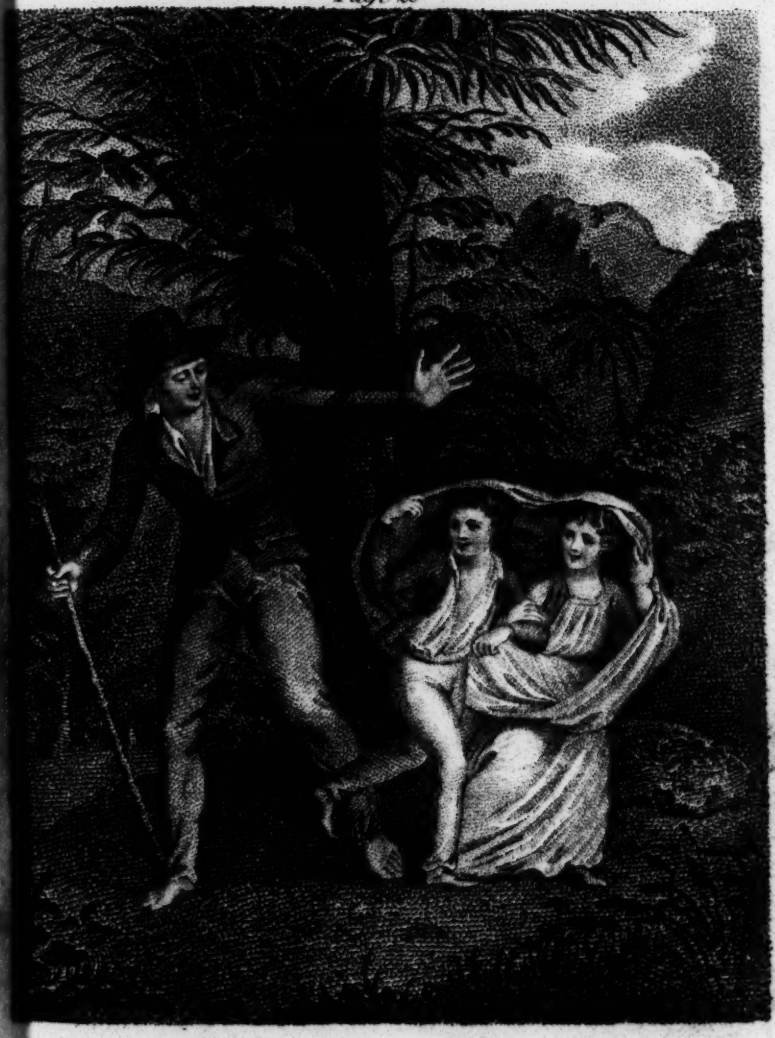
in the ſame cradle, their cheeks, their boſoms preſſed cloſe together, their hands thrown round each other's neck, and, ſleeping, locked in one another's arms.

When they began to ſpeak, the firſt names they learnt to give each other were thoſe of brother and ſiſter, and childhood knows no ſofter appellation. Their education ſerved to augment their early friendſhip, by directing it to the ſupply of their reciprocal wants. In a ſhort time, all that regarded the houſehold economy, the care of preparing their rural repaſts, became the taſk of Virginia, whoſe labours were always crowned with the praiſes and kiſſes of her brother. As for Paul, always in motion, he dug the garden with Domingo, or followed him with a little hatchet into the woods, where, if, in his rambles, he eſpied a beautiful flower, fine fruit, or a neſt of birds, even at the top of a tree, he climbed up and brought it home to his ſiſter.

When you met with one of thoſe children, you might be ſure the other was not diſtant. One day, coming down that mountain, I ſaw Virginia at the end of the garden, running towards the houſe, with her petticoat thrown over her head, in order to ſcreen

herſelf from a ſhower of rain. At a diſtance I thought ſhe was alone; but as I haſtened towards her, in order to help her on, I perceived that ſhe held Paul by the arm, who was almoſt entirely enveloped in the ſame canopy, and both were laughing heartily at being ſheltered together under an umbrella of their own invention. Thoſe two charming faces, placed within the petticoat, ſwelled by the wind, recalled to my mind the children of Leda, encloſed within the ſame ſhell.

Their ſole ſtudy was how to pleaſe and aſſiſt each other; for of all other things they were ignorant, and knew neither how to read or write. They were never diſturbed by reſearches into paſt times, nor did their curioſity extend beyond the bounds of that mountain. They believed the world ended at the ſhores of their own iſland, and all their ideas and affections were confined within its limits. Their mutual tenderneſs, and that of their mothers, employed all the activity of their ſouls. Their tears had never been called forth by long application to uſeleſs ſciences. Their minds had never been wearied by leſſons of morality, ſuperfluous to boſoms unconſcious of ill. They had never been taught that they muſt



Singer inv.t

Publish'd by Vernor, & Hood, May 24. 1796.

muſt not ſteal, becauſe every thing with them was in common; or be intemperate, becauſe their ſimple food was left to their own diſcretion; or falſe, becauſe they had no truth to conceal. Their young imaginations had never been terrified by the idea that God has puniſhments in ſtore for ungrateful children, ſince with them filial affection aroſe naturally from maternal fondneſs. All they had been taught of religion was to love it: and if they did not offer up long prayers in the church, wherever they were, in the houſe, in the fields, in the woods, they raiſed towards heaven their innocent hands, and their hearts purified by virtuous affections.

Thus paſſed their early childhood, like a beautiful dawn, the prelude of a bright day. Already they partook, with their mothers, the cares of the houſehold. As ſoon as the cry of the wakeful cock announced the firſt beam of the morning Virginia aroſe, and haſtened to draw water from a neighbouring ſpring; then returning to the houſe, ſhe prepared the breakfaſt. When the riſing ſun lighted up the points of thoſe rocks which overhang this incloſure, Margaret and her child went to the dwelling of Madame de la Tour; and they offered up toge-

ther their morning prayer. This ſacrifice of thankſgiving always preceded their firſt repaſt, which they often partook before the door of the cottage, ſeated upon the graſs under a canopy of plantain; and while the branches of that delightful tree afforded a grateful ſhade, its ſolid fruit furniſhed food ready prepared by nature; and its long gloſſy leaves, ſpread upon the table, ſupplied the want of linen.

Plentiful and wholeſome nouriſhment gave early growth and vigour to the perſons of thoſe children, and their countenances expreſſed the purity and the peace of their ſouls. At twelve years of age the figure of Virginia was in ſome degree formed: a profuſion of light hair ſhaded her face, to which her blue eyes and coral lips gave the moſt charming brilliancy. Her eyes ſparkled with vivacity when ſhe ſpoke; but when ſhe was ſilent, her look had a caſt upwards, which gave it an expreſſion of extreme ſenſibility, or rather of tender melancholy. Already the figure of Paul diſplayed the graces of manly beauty. He was taller than Virginia; his ſkin was of a darker tint, his noſe more aquiline; and his black eyes would have been too piercing, if the long eye laſhes, by which they were ſhaded, had not given

given them a look of ſoftneſs. He was conſtantly in motion, except when his ſiſter appeared, and then, placed at her ſide, he became quiet. Their meals often paſſed in ſilence; and, from the grace of their attitudes, the beautiful proportions of their figures, and their naked feet, you might have fancied you beheld an antique group of white marble, repreſenting ſome of the children of Niobe; if thoſe eyes which ſought to meet, thoſe ſmiles which were anſwered by ſmiles of the moſt tender ſoftneſs, had not rather given you the idea of thoſe happy celeſtial ſpirits, whoſe nature is love, and who are not obliged to have recourſe to words for the expreſſion of that intuitive ſentiment. In the mean time Madame de la Tour, perceiving every day ſome unfolding grace, ſome new beauty, in her daughter, felt her maternal anxiety increaſe with her tenderneſs. She often ſaid to me, "If I ſhould die, what will become of Virginia without fortune?"

Madame de la Tour had an aunt in France, who was a woman of quality, rich, old, and a great bigot. She had behaved towards her niece with ſo much cruelty upon her marriage, that Madame de la Tour had determined that no diſtreſs or misfor-

tune ſhould ever compel her to have recourſe to her hard-hearted relation. But when ſhe became a mother, the pride of reſentment was ſtifled in the ſtronger feelings of maternal tenderneſs. She wrote to her aunt, informing her of the ſudden death of her huſband, the birth of her daughter, and the difficulties in which ſhe was involved at a diſtance from her own country, without ſupport, and burthened with a child. She received no anſwer: but, notwithſtanding that high ſpirit which was natural to her character, ſhe no longer feared expoſing herſelf to mortification and reproach; and, although ſhe knew her relation would never pardon her having married a man of merit, but not of noble birth, ſhe continued to write to her by every opportunity, in the hope of awakening her compaſſion for Virginia. Many years, however, paſſed, during which ſhe received not the ſmalleſt teſtimony of her remembrance.

At length, in 1738, three years after the arrival of Monſieur de la Bourdonnais in this iſland, Madame de la Tour was informed that the governor had a letter to give her from her aunt. She flew to Port Louis, careleſs on this occaſion of appearing in her homely

homely garment. Maternal hope and joy ſubdued all thoſe little conſiderations which are loſt when the mind is abſorbed by any powerful ſentiment. Monſieur de la Bourdonnais delivered to her a letter from her aunt, who informed her, that ſhe deſerved her fate for having married an adventurer and a libertine: that miſplaced paſſions brought along with them their own puniſhment, and that the ſudden death of her huſband muſt be conſidered as a viſitation from heaven: that ſhe had done well in going to a diſtant iſland, rather than diſhonour her family by remaining in France; and that, after all, in the colony where ſhe had taken refuge, every perſon grew rich except the idle. Having thus laviſhed ſufficient cenſure upon the conduct of her niece, ſhe finiſhed by an eulogium on herſelf. To avoid, ſhe ſaid, the almoſt inevitable evils of marriage, ſhe had determined to remain in a ſingle ſtate. In truth, being of a very ambitious temper, ſhe had reſolved only to unite herſelf to a man of high rank; and although ſhe was very rich, her fortune was not found a ſufficient bribe, even at court, to counterbalance the malignant diſpoſitions of her mind, and the diſagreeable qualities of her perſon.

She added, in a poſtſcript, that, after mature deliberation, ſhe had ſtrongly recommended her niece to Monſieur de la Bourdonnais. This ſhe had indeed done, but in a manner of late too common, and which renders a patron perhaps even more formidable than a declared enemy; for, in order to juſtify herſelf, ſhe had cruelly ſlandered her niece, while ſhe affected to pity her misfortunes.

Madame de la Tour, whom no unprejudiced perſon could have ſeen without feeling ſympathy and reſpect, was received with the utmoſt coldneſs by Monſieur de la Bourdonnais; and when ſhe painted to him her own ſituation, and that of her child, he replied, with indifference, "We will ſee what can be done—There are ſo many to relieve—Why did you offend ſo reſpectable a relation?—You have been much to blame."

Madame de la Tour returned to her cottage, her boſom throbbing with all the bitterneſs of diſappointment. When ſhe arrived, ſhe threw herſelf on a chair, and then flinging her aunt's letter on the table, exclaimed to her friend, "This is the recompenſe of eleven years of patient expectation!" As Madame de

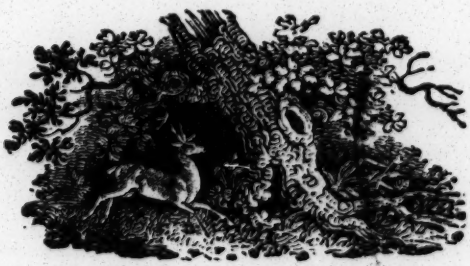
de la Tour was the only perſon in their little circle who could read, ſhe again took up the letter, which ſhe read aloud. Scarcely had ſhe finiſhed, when Margaret exclaimed, "What have we to do with your relations? Has God then forſaken us? He only is our father. Have we not hitherto been happy? Why then this regret? You have no courage." Seeing Madame de la Tour in tears, ſhe threw herſelf upon her neck, and preſſing her in her arms, "My dear friend!" cried ſhe, "My dear friend!" But her emotion choaked her utterance.

At this ſight Virginia burſt into tears, and preſſed her mother's hand, and Margaret's, alternately, to her lips, and to her heart; while Paul, with his eyes inflamed with anger, cried, claſped his hands together, and ſtamped with his feet, not knowing whom to blame for this ſcene of miſery. The noiſe ſoon led Domingo and Mary to the ſpot, and the little habitation reſounded with the cries of diſtreſs. "Ah, Madame!—My good miſtreſs!—My dear mother! Do not weep!—"

Thoſe tender proofs of affection at length diſpelled Madame de la Tour's ſorrow. She took Paul and Virginia

Virginia in her arms, and, embracing them, cried, "You are the cauſe of my affliction, and yet my only ſource of delight! Yes, my dear children, misfortune has reached me from a diſtance, but ſurely I am ſurrounded by happineſs." Paul and Virginia did not underſtand this reflection; but, when they ſaw that ſhe was calm, they ſmiled, and continued to careſs her. Thus tranquillity was reſtored, and what had paſſed proved but a tranſient ſtorm, which ſerves to give freſh verdure to a beautiful ſpring.

Although Madame de la Tour appeared calm in the preſence of her family, ſhe ſometimes communicated to me the feelings that preyed upon her mind, and ſoon after this period gave me the following ſonnet.



SONNET.

TO DISAPPOINTMENT.

PALE Diſappointment! at thy freezing name
Chill fears in ev'ry ſhiv'ring vein I prove;
My ſinking pulſe almoſt forgets to move,
And life almoſt forſakes my languid frame:
Yet thee, relentleſs nymph! no more I blame:
Why do my thoughts midſt vain illuſions rove?
Why gild the charms of friendſhip and of love
With the warm glow of fancy's purple flame?
When ruffling winds have ſome bright fane o'erthrown,
Which ſhone on painted clouds, or ſeem'd to ſhine,
Shall the fond gazer dream for him alone
Thoſe clouds were ſtable, and at fate repine?
I feel, alas! the fault is all my own,
And, ah! the cruel puniſhment is mine!

The amiable diſpoſition of thoſe children unfolded itſelf daily. On a Sunday, their mothers having gone at break of day to maſs, at the church of the Shaddock Grove, the children perceived a negro woman beneath the plantains which ſhaded their habitation. She appeared almoſt waſted to a ſkeleton, and had no other garment than a ſhred of coarſe cloth thrown acroſs her loins. She flung herſelf at Virginia's feet, who was preparing the family breakfaſt, and cried, "My good young lady, have pity on a poor ſlave. For a whole month I have wandered amongſt theſe mountains, half dead with hunger, and often purſued by the hunters and their dogs. I fled from my maſter, a rich planter of the Black River, who has uſed me as you ſee;" and ſhe ſhewed her body marked by deep ſcars from the laſhes ſhe had received. She added, "I was going to drown myſelf; but hearing you lived here, I ſaid to myſelf, ſince there are ſtill ſome good white people in this country, I need not die yet."

Virginia anſwered with emotion, "Take courage, unfortunate creature! here is food;" and ſhe gave her the breakfaſt ſhe had prepared; which the poor ſlave in a few minutes devoured. When her hunger

hunger was appeaſed, Virginia ſaid to her, "Unhappy woman! will you let me go and aſk forgiveneſs for you of your maſter? Surely the ſight of you will touch him with pity—Will you ſhew me the way?"—"Angel of heaven!" anſwered the poor negro woman, "I will follow you where you pleaſe." Virginia called her brother, and begged him to accompany her. The ſlave led the way, by winding and difficult paths, through the woods, over mountains which they climbed with difficulty, and acroſs rivers, through which they were obliged to wade. At length they reached the foot of a precipice upon the borders of the Black River. There they perceived a well-built houſe, ſurrounded by extenſive plantations, and a great number of ſlaves employed at their various labours. Their maſter was walking amongſt them with a pipe in his mouth, and a ſwitch in his hand. He was a tall thin figure, of a brown complexion; his eyes were ſunk in his head, and his dark eye-brows were joined together. Virginia, holding Paul by the hand, drew near, and with much emotion begged him, for the love of God, to pardon his poor ſlave, who ſtood trembling a few paces behind. The man at firſt paid little attention to the children, whom he ſaw were meanly dreſſed.

But when he obſerved the elegance of Virginia's form, and the profuſion of her beautiful light treſſes, which had eſcaped from beneath her blue cap; when he heard the ſoft tone of her voice, which trembled, as well as her whole frame, while ſhe implored his compaſſion; he took the pipe from his mouth, and, lifting up his ſtick, ſwore, with a terrible oath, that he pardoned his ſlave, not for the love of heaven, but of her who aſked his forgiveneſs. Virginia made a ſign to the ſlave to approach her maſter, and inſtantly ſprung away, followed by Paul.

They climbed up the precipice they had deſcended; and, having gained the ſummit, ſeated themſelves at the foot of a tree, overcome with fatigue, hunger, and thirſt. They had left their cottage faſting, and had walked five leagues ſince break of day. Paul ſaid to Virginia, "My dear ſiſter, it is paſt noon, and I am ſure you are thirſty and hungry: we ſhall find no dinner here; let us go down the mountain again, and aſk the maſter of the poor ſlave for ſome food." "Oh, no," anſwered Virginia; "he frightens me too much. Remember what mamma ſometimes ſays, 'the bread of the wicked is like ſtones in the mouth.' "What ſhall

we

we do then?" ſaid Paul: "Theſe trees produce no fruit; and I ſhall not be able to find even a tamarind or a lemon to refreſh you." Scarcely had he pronounced theſe words, when they heard the daſhing of waters which fell from a neighbouring rock. They ran thither, and, having quenched their thirſt at this cryſtal ſpring, they gathered a few creſſes which grew on the border of the ſtream. While they were wandering in the woods in ſearch of more ſolid nouriſhment, Virginia ſpied a young palm-tree. The kind of cabbage which is found at the top of this tree, enfolded within its leaves, forms an excellent ſuſtenance; but, although the ſtalk of the tree was not thicker than a man's leg, it was above ſixty feet in height. The wood of this tree is compoſed of fine filaments; but the bark is ſo hard that it turns the edge of the hatchet; and Paul was not even furniſhed with a knife. At length he thought of ſetting fire to the palm-tree; but a new difficulty occurred; he had no ſteel with which to ſtrike fire; and, although the whole iſland is covered with rocks, I do not believe it is poſſible to find a flint. Neceſſity, however, is fertile in expedients, and the moſt uſeful inventions have ariſen from men placed in the moſt deſtitute ſituations. Paul determined to

kindle a fire in the manner of the negroes. With the ſharp end of a ſtone he made a ſmall hole in the branch of a tree that was quite dry, which he held between his feet; he then ſharpened another dry branch of a different ſort of wood, and afterwards placing the piece of pointed wood in the ſmall hole of the branch which he held with his feet, and turning it rapidly between his hands, in a few minutes ſmoke and ſparks of fire iſſued from the points of contact. Paul then heaped together dried graſs and branches, and ſet fire to the palm-tree, which ſoon fell to the ground. The fire was uſeful to him in ſtripping off the long, thick, and pointed leaves, within which the cabbage was encloſed.

Paul and Virginia ate part of the cabbage raw, and part dreſſed upon the aſhes, which they found equally palatable. They made this frugal repaſt with delight, from the remembrance of the benevolent action they had performed in the morning: yet their joy was embittered by the thoughts of that uneaſineſs which their long abſence would give their mothers. Virginia often recurred to this ſubject; but Paul, who felt his ſtrength renewed by their meal, aſſured her that it would not be long before they reached home.

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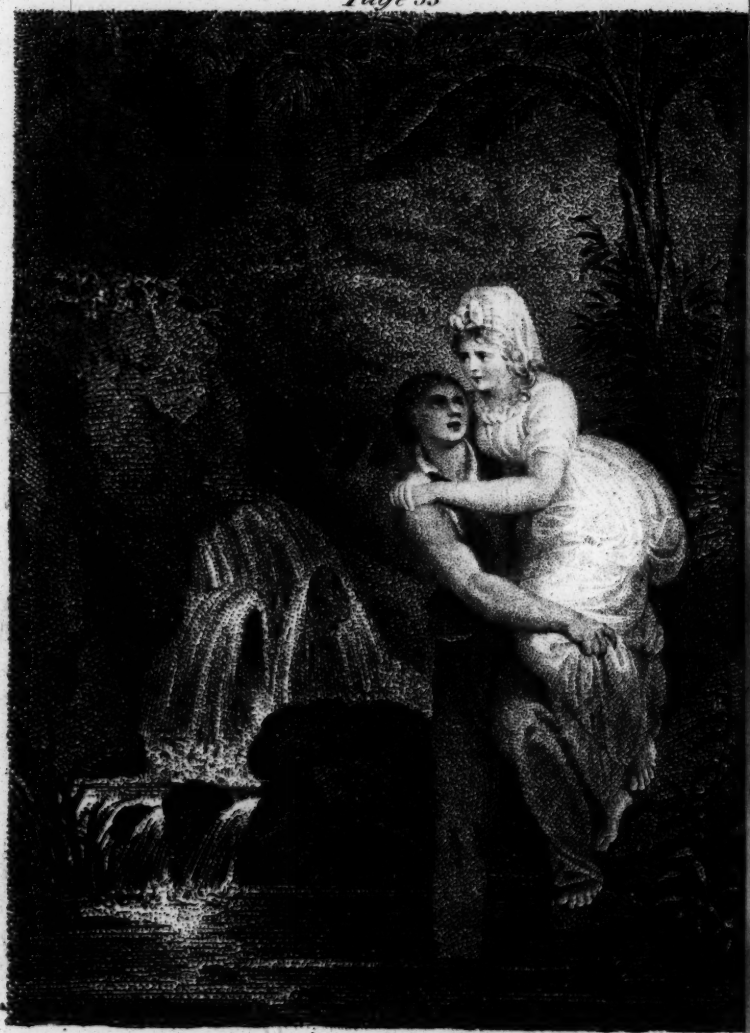

Liagee inv.t

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After dinner they recollected that they had no guide, and that they were ignorant of the way. Paul, whoſe ſpirit was not ſubdued by difficulties, ſaid to Virginia, "The ſun ſhines full upon our huts at noon; we muſt paſs, as we did this morning, over that mountain with its three points, which you ſee yonder. Come, let us go." This mountain is called the Three Peaks. Paul and Virginia deſcended the precipice of the Black River, on the northern ſide; and arrived, after an hour's walk, on the banks of a large ſtream.

Great part of this iſland is ſo little known, even now, that many of its rivers and mountains have not yet received a name. The river, on the banks of which our travellers ſtood, rolls foaming over a bed of rocks. The noiſe of the water frightened Virginia, and ſhe durſt not wade through the ſtream: Paul therefore took her up in his arms, and went thus loaded over the ſlippery rocks, which formed the bed of the river, careleſs of the tumultuous noiſe of its waters. "Do not be afraid," cried he to Virginia; "I feel very ſtrong with you. If the inhabitant of the Black River had refuſed you the pardon of his ſlave, I would have fought with him."

"What!" anſwered Virginia, "with that great wicked man?—To what have I expoſed you, gracious Heaven! How difficult it is to do good! and it is ſo eaſy to do wrong."

When Paul had croſſed the river, he wiſhed to continue his journey carrying his ſiſter, and believed he was able to climb in that way the mountain of the Three Peaks, which was ſtill at the diſtance of half a league; but his ſtrength ſoon failed, and he was obliged to ſet down his burden, and to reſt himſelf by her ſide. Virginia then ſaid to him, "My dear brother, the ſun is going down; you have ſtill ſome ſtrength left, but mine has quite failed: do leave me here, and return home alone to eaſe the fears of our mothers." "Oh, no," ſaid Paul; "I will not leave you. If night ſurpriſes us in this wood, I will light a fire, and bring down another palm-tree: you ſhall eat the cabbage; and I will form a covering of the leaves to ſhelter you." In the mean time, Virginia being a little reſted, pulled from the trunk of an old tree, which hung over the bank of the river, ſome long leaves of hart's tongue, which grew near its root. With thoſe leaves ſhe made a ſort of buſkin, with which ſhe covered her feet, that were bleeding

bleeding from the ſharpneſs of the ſtony paths; for, in her eager deſire to do good, ſhe had forgot to put on her ſhoes. Feeling her feet cooled by the freſhneſs of the leaves, ſhe broke off a branch of bamboo, and continued her walk, leaning with one hand on the ſtaff, and with the other on Paul.

They walked on ſlowly through the woods; but, from the height of the trees, and the thickneſs of their foliage, they ſoon loſt ſight of the mountain of the Three Peaks, by which they had directed their courſe, and even of the ſun, which was now ſetting. At length they wandered, without perceiving it, from the beaten path in which they had hitherto walked, and found themſelves in a labyrinth of trees and rocks, which appeared to have no opening. Paul made Virginia ſit down, while he ran backwards and forwards, half frantic, in ſearch of a path which might lead them out of this thick wood; but all his reſearches were vain. He climbed to the top of a tree, from whence he hoped at leaſt to diſcern the mountain of the Three Peaks; but all he could perceive around him were the tops of trees, ſome of which were gilded by the laſt beams of the ſetting ſun. Already the ſhadows of the mountains were

ſpread over the foreſts in the vallies. The wind ceaſed, as it uſually does, at the evening hour. The moſt profound ſilence reigned in thoſe awful ſolitudes, which was only interrupted by the cry of the ſtags, who came to repoſe in that unfrequented ſpot. Paul, in the hope that ſome hunter would hear his voice, called out as loud as he was able, "Come, come to the help of Virginia." But the echoes of the foreſts alone anſwered his call, and repeated again and again, "Virginia—Virginia." Paul at at length deſcended from the tree overcome with fatigue and vexation, and reflected how they might beſt contrive to paſs the night in that deſert. But he could find neither a fountain, a palm-tree, nor even a branch of dry wood to kindle a fire. He then felt, by experience, the ſenſe of his own weakneſs, and began to weep. Virginia ſaid to him, "Do not weep, my dear brother, or I ſhall die with grief. I am the cauſe of all your ſorrow, and of all that our mothers ſuffer at this moment. I find we ought to do nothing, not even good, without conſulting our parents. Oh, I have been very imprudent!" and ſhe began to ſhed tears. She then ſaid to Paul, "Let us pray to God, my dear brother, and he wil hear us."

Scarcely

Scarcely had they finiſhed their prayer, when they heard the barking of a dog. "It is the dog of ſome hunter," ſaid Paul, "who comes here at night to lay in wait for the ſtags." Soon after the dog barked again with more violence. "Surely," ſaid Virginia, "it is Fidele, our own dog: yes, I know his voice. Are we then ſo near home? at the foot of our own mountain?" A moment after Fidele was at their feet, barking, howling, crying, and devouring them with his careſſes. Before they had recovered their ſurpriſe, they ſaw Domingo running towards them. At the ſight of this good old negro, who wept with joy, they began to weep too, without being able to utter one word. When Domingo had recovered himſelf a little, "Oh, my dear children," cried he, "how miſerable have you made your mothers! How much were they aſtoniſhed when they returned from maſs, where I went with them, at not finding you! Mary, who was at work at a little diſtance, could not tell us where you were gone. I ran backwards and forwards about the plantation, not knowing where to look for you. At laſt I took ſome of your old clothes, and ſhewing them to Fidele, the poor animal, as if he underſtood me, immediately began to ſcent your path; and conducted

me, continually wagging his tail, to the Black River. It was there a planter told me that you had brought back a negro woman, his ſlave, and that he had granted you her pardon. But what pardon! he ſhewed her to me with her feet chained to a block of wood, and an iron collar with three hooks faſtened round her neck!

"From thence Fidele, ſtill on the ſcent, led me up the precipice of the Black River, where he again ſtopped and barked with all his might. This was on the brink of a ſpring, near a fallen palm-tree, and cloſe to a fire which was ſtill ſmoking. At laſt he led me to this very ſpot. We are at the foot of the mountain of the Three Peaks, and ſtill four leagues from home. Come, eat, and gather ſtrength." He then preſented them with cakes, fruits, and a large gourd filled with a liquor compoſed of wine, water, lemon-juice, ſugar, and nutmeg, which their mothers had prepared. Virginia ſighed at the recollection of the poor ſlave, and at the uneaſineſs which they had given their mothers. She repeated ſeveral times, "Oh, how difficult it is to do good!"

While ſhe and Paul were taking refreſhment, Domingo kindled a fire, and having ſought among the rocks for a particular kind of crooked wood, which burns when quite green, throwing out a great blaze, he made a torch, which he lighted, it being already night. But when they prepared to continue their journey, a new difficulty occurred: Paul and Virginia could no longer walk, their feet being violently ſwelled and inflamed. Domingo knew not whether it were beſt to leave them, and go in ſearch of help, or remain and paſs the night with them on that ſpot. "What is become of the time," ſaid he, "when I uſed to carry you both together in my arms? But now you are grown big, and I am grown old." While he was in this perplexity, a troop of Maron negroes appeared at the diſtance of twenty paces. The chief of the band, approaching Paul and Virginia, ſaid to them, "Good little white people, do not be afraid. We ſaw you paſs this morning with a negro woman of the Black River. You went to aſk pardon for her of her wicked maſter, and we in return for this will carry you home upon our ſhoulders." He then made a ſign, and four of the ſtrongeſt negroes immediately formed a ſort of litter with the branches of trees and lianas, in which having

having ſeated Paul and Virginia, they placed it upon their ſhoulders. Domingo marched in front, carrying his lighted torch, and they proceeded amidſt the rejoicings of the whole troop, and overwhelmed with their benedictions. Virginia, affected by this ſcene, ſaid to Paul with emotion, "Oh, my dear brother! God never leaves a good action without reward."

It was midnight when they arrived at the foot of the mountain, on the ridges of which ſeveral fires were lighted. Scarcely had they begun to aſcend, when they heard voices crying out, "Is it you, my children?" They anſwered, together with the negroes, "Yes, it is us;" and ſoon after perceived their mothers and Mary coming towards them with lighted ſticks in their hands. "Unhappy children!" cried Madame de la Tour, "from whence do you come? What agonies you have made us ſuffer!" "We come," ſaid Virginia, "from the Black River, where we went to aſk pardon for a poor Maron ſlave, to whom I gave our breakfaſt this morning, becauſe ſhe was dying of hunger; and theſe Maron negroes have brought us home." Madame de la Tour embraced her daughter without being able to ſpeak; and Virginia, who felt her face wet

wet with her mother's tears, exclaimed, "You repay me for all the hardſhips I have ſuffered." Margaret, in a tranſport of delight, preſſed Paul in her arms, crying, "And you alſo, my dear child; you have done a good action." When they reached the hut with their children, they gave plenty of food to the negroes, who returned to their woods, after praying that the bleſſing of heaven might deſcend on thoſe good white people.

Every day was to thoſe families a day of tranquillity and of happineſs. Neither ambition nor envy diſturbed their repoſe. In this iſland, where, as in all the European colonies, every malignant anecdote is circulated with avidity, their virtues, and even their names, were unknown. Only when a traveller on the road of the Shaddock Grove inquired of any of the inhabitants of the plain, "Who lives in thoſe two cottages above?" he was always anſwered, even by thoſe who did not know them, "They are good people." Thus the modeſt violet, concealed beneath the thorny buſhes, ſheds its fragrance, while itſelf remains unſeen.

Doing

Doing good appeared to thoſe amiable families to be the chief purpoſe of life. Solitude, far from having blunted their benevolent feelings, or rendered their diſpoſitions moroſe, had left their hearts open to every tender affection. The contemplation of nature filled their minds with enthuſiaſtic delight. They adored the bounty of that Providence which had enabled them to ſpread abundance and beauty amidſt thoſe barren rocks, and to enjoy thoſe pure and ſimple pleaſures which are ever grateful and ever new. It was probably in thoſe diſpoſitions of mind that Madame de la Tour compoſed the following ſonnet.

SONNET

TO SIMPLICITY.

NYMPH of the deſert! on this lonely ſhore,
Simplicity, thy bleſſings ſtill are mine,
And all thou canſt not give I pleas'd reſign,
For all beſide can ſooth my ſoul no more.
I aſk no laviſh heaps to ſwell my ſtore,
And purchaſe pleaſures far remote from thine.
Ye joys, for which the race of Europe pine,
Ah, not for me your ſtudied grandeur pour:
Let me where yon tall cliffs are rudely pil'd,
Where towers the palm amidſt the mountain trees,
Where pendent from the ſteep, with graces wild,
The blue liana floats upon the breeze.
Still haunt thoſe bold receſſes, Nature's child,
Where thy majeſtic charms my ſpirit ſeize!

Paul at twelve years of age was ſtronger and more intelligent than Europeans are at fifteen, and had embelliſhed the plantations, which Domingo had only cultivated. He had gone with him to the neighbouring woods, and rooted up young plants of lemon-trees, oranges, and tamarinds, the round heads of which are of ſo freſh a green, together with date palm-trees, producing fruit filled with a ſweet cream, which has the fine perfume of the orange flower. Thoſe trees, which were already of a conſiderable ſize, he planted round this little incloſure. He had alſo ſown the ſeeds of many trees which the ſecond year bears flowers or fruit. The agathis, encircled with long cluſters of white flowers, which hang upon it like the cryſtal pendents of a luſtre. The Perſian lilac, which lifts high in air its grey flax-coloured branches. The pappaw-tree, the trunk of which, without branches, forms a column ſet round with green melons, bearing on their heads large leaves like thoſe of the fig-tree.

The ſeeds and kernels of the gum-tree, terminalia, mangoes, alligator-pears, the guava, the bread-tree, and the narrow-leaved eugenia, were planted with profuſion; and the greater number of thoſe trees already

already afforded to their young cultivator both ſhade and fruit. His induſtrious hands had diffuſed the riches of nature even on the moſt barren parts of the plantation. Several kinds of aloes, the common Indian fig adorned with yellow flowers ſpotted with red, and the thorny five-angled touch-thiſtle, grew upon the dark ſummits of the rocks, and ſeemed to aim at reaching the long lianas, which, loaded with blue or crimſon flowers, hung ſcattered over the ſteepeſt parts of the mountain. Thoſe trees were diſpoſed in ſuch a manner that you could command the whole at one view. He had placed in the middle of this hollow the plants of the loweſt growth: behind grew the ſhrubs; then trees of an ordinary height; above which roſe majeſtically the venerable lofty groves which border the circumference. Thus from its centre this extenſive incloſure appeared like a verdant amphitheatre ſpread with fruits and flowers, containing a variety of vegetables, a chain of meadow-land, and fields of rice and corn. In bending thoſe vegetable productions to his own taſte, he followed the deſigns of Nature. Guided by her ſuggeſtions, he had thrown upon the riſing grounds ſuch ſeeds as the winds might ſcatter over the heights, and near the borders of the ſprings ſuch grains as float upon

upon the waters. Every plant grew in its proper ſoil, and every ſpot ſeemed decorated by her hands. The waters, which ruſhed from the ſummits of the rocks, formed in ſome parts of the valley limpid fountains, and in other parts were ſpread into large clear mirrors, which reflected the bright verdure, the trees in bloſſom, the bending rocks, and the azure heavens.

Notwithſtanding the great irregularity of the ground, moſt of theſe plantations were eaſy of acceſs. We had, indeed, all given him our advice and aſſiſtance, in order to accompliſh this end. He had formed a path which winded round the valley, and of which various ramifications led from the circumference to the centre. He had drawn ſome advantage from the moſt rugged ſpots; and had blended in harmonious variety ſmooth walks with the aſperities of the ſoil, and wild with domeſtic productions. With that immenſe quantity of rolling ſtones which now block up thoſe paths, and which are ſcattered over moſt of the ground of this iſland, he formed here and there pyramids; and at their baſe he laid earth, and planted the roots of roſe-buſhes, the Barbadoes flower fence, and other ſhrubs which love to climb

climb the rocks. In a ſhort time thoſe gloomy ſhapeleſs pyramids were covered with verdure, or with the glowing tints of the moſt beautiful flowers. The hollow receſſes of aged trees, which bent over the borders of the ſtream, formed vaulted caves impenetrable to the ſun, and where you might enjoy coolneſs during the heats of the day. That path led to a clump of foreſt trees, in the centre of which grew a cultivated tree, loaded with fruit. Here was a field ripe with corn, there an orchard. From that avenue you had a view of the cottages; from this, of the inacceſſible ſummit of the mountain. Beneath that tufted bower of gum-trees, interwoven with lianas, no object could be diſcerned even at noon; while the point of the neighbouring rock, which projects from the mountain, commanded a view of the whole incloſure, and of the diſtant ocean, where ſometimes we ſpied a veſſel coming from Europe, or returning thither. On this rock the two families aſſembled in the evening, and enjoyed in ſilence the freſhneſs of the air, the fragrance of the flowers, the murmurs of the fountains, and the laſt blended harmonies of light and ſhade.

Nothing could be more agreeable than the names which were beſtowed upon ſome of the charming retreats of this labyrinth. That rock, of which I was ſpeaking, and from which my approach was diſcerned at a conſiderable diſtance, was called the Diſcovery of Friendſhip. Paul and Virginia amidſt their ſports had planted a bamboo on that ſpot; and whenever they ſaw me coming, they hoiſted a little white handkerchief by way of ſignal of my approach, as they had ſeen a flag hoiſted on the neighbouring mountain at the ſight of a veſſel at ſea. The idea ſtruck me of engraving an inſcription upon the ſtalk of this reed. Whatever pleaſure I have felt during my travels at the ſight of a ſtatue or monument of antiquity, I have felt ſtill more in reading a well-written inſcription. It ſeems to me as if a human voice iſſued from the ſtone, and, making itſelf heard through the lapſe of ages, addreſſed man in the midſt of a deſert, and told him, that he is not alone; that other men, on that very ſpot, have felt, and thought, and ſuffered, like himſelf. If the inſcription belongs to an ancient nation, which no longer exiſts, it leads the ſoul through infinite ſpace, and inſpires the feeling of its immortality, by ſhewing that a thought has ſurvived the ruins of an empire.

I inſcribed

I inſcribed then, on the little maſt of Paul and Virginia's flag, thoſe lines of Horace:

. . . . . Fratres Helenæ, lucida ſidera,
Ventorumque regat pater,
Obſtrictis aliis, præter Iapygæ.

"May the brothers of Helen, lucid ſtars like you, and the Father of the winds, guide you; and may you only feel the breath of the zephyr."

I engraved this line of Virgil upon the bark of a gum-tree, under the ſhade of which Paul ſometimes ſeated himſelf in order to contemplate the agitated ſea.

Fortunatus et ille deos qui novit agreſtes!

"Happy art thou, my ſon, to know only the paſtoral divinities."

And above the door of Madame de la Tour's cottage, where the families uſed to aſſemble, I placed this line:

At ſecura quies, et neſcia fallere vita.

"Here is a calm conſcience, and a life ignorant of deceit."

But Virginia did not approve of my Latin; ſhe ſaid that what I had placed at the foot of her weather-flag was too long and too learned. "I ſhould have liked better," added ſhe, "to have ſeen inſcribed, *Always agitated, yet ever conſtant.*"

The ſenſibility of thoſe happy families extended itſelf to every thing around them. They had given names the moſt tender to objects in appearance the moſt indifferent. A border of orange, plantain, and bread-trees, planted round a green-ſward where Virginia and Paul ſometimes danced, was called *Concord.* An old tree, beneath the ſhade of which Madame de la Tour and Margaret uſed to relate their misfortunes, was called, *The tears wiped away.* They gave the names of Brittany and Normandy to little portions of ground, where they had ſown corn, ſtrawberries, and peas. Domingo and Mary wiſhing, in imitation of their miſtreſſes, to recall the places of their birth in Africa, gave the names of Angola and Foullepointe to the ſpots where grew the herb with which they wove baſkets, and where they had planted a calbaſſia-tree. Thus, with the productions of their reſpective climates, thoſe exiled families cheriſhed the dear illuſions which bind us to

our

our native country, and ſoftened their regrets in a foreign land. Alas! I have ſeen animated by a thouſand ſoothing appellations, thoſe trees, thoſe fountains, thoſe ſtones, which are now overthrown, which now, like the plains of Greece, preſent nothing but ruins and affecting remembrances.

Neither the neglect of her European friends, nor the delightful romantic ſpot which ſhe inhabited, could baniſh from the mind of Madame de la Tour this tender attachment to her native country. While the luxurious fruits of this climate gratified the taſte of her family, ſhe delighted to rear thoſe which were more grateful, only becauſe they were the production of her early home. Among other little pieces, addreſſed to flowers and fruits of northern climes, I found the following ſonnet to the ſtrawberry.

SONNET

TO THE STRAWBERRY.

The ſtrawberry blooms upon its lowly bed;
Plant of my native ſoil! The lime may fling
More potent fragrance on the zephyr's wing,
The milky cocoa richer juices ſhed,
The white guava lovelier bloſſoms ſpread;
But not, like thee, to fond remembrance bring
The vaniſh'd hours of life's enchanting ſpring;
Short calendar of joys for ever fled!
Thou bidſt the ſcenes of childhood riſe to view,
The wild wood path which fancy loves to trace,
Where, veil'd in leaves, thy fruit, of roſy hue,
Lurk'd on its pliant ſtem with modeſt grace.
But, ah! when thought would later years renew,
Alas, ſucceſſive ſorrows crowd the ſpace.

But perhaps the moſt charming ſpot of this incloſure was that which was called the *Repoſe of Virginia*. At the foot of the rock, which bore the name of the *Diſcovery of Friendſhip*, is a nook from whence iſſues a fountain, forming near its ſource a little ſpot of marſhy ſoil in the midſt of a field of rich graſs. At the time Margaret was delivered of Paul, I made her a preſent of an Indian cocoa which had been given me, and which ſhe planted on the border of this fenny ground, in order that the tree might one day ſerve to mark the epocha of her ſon's birth. Madame de la Tour planted another cocoa, with the ſame view, at the birth of Virginia. Thoſe fruits produced two cocoa-trees, which formed all the records of the two families: one was called the tree of Paul, the other the tree of Virginia. They grew, in the ſame proportion as the two young perſons, of an unequal height; but they roſe at the end of twelve years above the cottages. Already their tender ſtalks were interwoven, and their young branches of cocoas hung over the baſon of the fountain. Except this little plantation, the nook of the rock had been left as it was decorated by nature. On its brown and humid ſides large plants of maidenhair gliſtened with their green and dark ſtars; and tufts of waveleaved

harts-tongue, ſuſpended like long ribbands of purpled green, floated on the winds. Near this grew a chain of the Madagaſcar periwinkle, the flowers of which reſemble the red gilliflower; and the long podded capſacum, the cloves of which are of the colour of blood, and more glowing than coral. The herb of balm, with its leaves within the heart, and the ſweet baſil, which has the odour of the gilliflower, exhaled the moſt delicious perfumes. From the ſteep ſummit of the mountain hung the graceful lianas, like a floating drapery, forming magnificent canopies of verdure upon the ſides of the rocks. The ſea-birds, allured by the ſtillneſs of thoſe retreats, reſorted thither to paſs the night. At the hour of ſunſet we perceived the curlew and the ſtint ſkimming along the ſea ſhore; the cardinal poized high in air; and the white bird of the tropic, which abandons, with the ſtar of day, the ſolitudes of the Indian ocean. Virginia loved to repoſe upon the border of this fountain, decorated with wild and ſublime magnificence. She often ſeated herſelf beneath the ſhade of the two cocoa-trees, and there ſhe ſometimes led her goats to graze. While ſhe prepared cheeſes of their milk, ſhe loved to ſee them browſe on the maidenhair which grew upon the ſteep ſides of the rock,

rock, and hang ſuſpended upon one of its cornices as on a pedeſtal. Paul, obſerving that Virginia was fond of this ſpot, brought thither from the neighbouring foreſt a great variety of birds-neſts. The old birds, following their young, eſtabliſhed themſelves in this new colony. Virginia at ſtated times diſtributed amongſt them grains of rice, millet, and maize. As ſoon as ſhe appeared, the whiſtling blackbird, the amadavid-bird, the note of which is ſo ſoft, the cardinal, the black frigate bird, with its plumage the colour of flame, forſook their buſhes; the peroquet, green as an emerald, deſcended from the neighbouring fan-palms; the partridge ran along the graſs: all advanced promiſcuouſly towards her like a brood of chickens: and ſhe and Paul delighted to obſerve their ſports, their repaſts, and their loves.

Amiable children! thus paſſed your early days in innocence and in the exerciſe of benevolence. How many times on this very ſpot have your mothers, preſſing you in their arms, bleſſed Heaven for the conſolations your unfolding virtues prepared for their declining years, while already they enjoyed the ſatisfaction of ſeeing you begin life under the moſt happy auſpices! How many times, beneath the ſhade

of

of thoſe rocks, have I partaken with them of your rural repaſts, which coſt no animal its life! Gourds filled with milk, freſh eggs, cakes of rice placed upon plantain leaves, baſkets loaded with mangoes, oranges, dates, pomegranates, pine-apples, furniſhed at the ſame time the moſt wholeſome food, the moſt beautiful colours, and the moſt delicious juices.

The converſation was gentle and innocent as the repaſts. Paul often talked of the labours of the day, and thoſe of the morrow. He was continually forming ſome plan of accommodation for their little ſociety. Here he diſcovered that the paths were rough; there, that the family circle was ill-ſeated: ſometimes the young arbours did not afford ſufficient ſhade, and Virginia might be better placed elſewhere.

In the rainy ſeaſons the two families aſſembled together in the hut, and employed themſelves in weaving mats of graſs, and baſkets of bamboo. Rakes, ſpades, and hatchets, were ranged along the walls in the moſt perfect order; and near thoſe inſtruments of agriculture were placed the productions which were the fruits of labour; ſacks of rice, ſheaves of

of corn, and baſkets of the plantain fruit. Some degree of luxury is uſually united with plenty; and Virginia was taught by her mother and Margaret to prepare ſherbet and cordials from the juice of the ſugar-cane, the orange, and the citron.

When night came, thoſe families ſupped together by the light of a lamp; after which, Madame de la Tour or Margaret related hiſtories of travellers loſt during the night in ſuch of the foreſts of Europe as are infeſted by banditti; or told a diſmal tale of ſome ſhip-wrecked veſſel, thrown by the tempeſt upon the rocks of a deſert iſland. To theſe recitals their children liſtened with eager ſenſibility, and earneſtly begged that Heaven would grant they might one day have the joy of ſhewing their hoſpitality towards ſuch unfortunate perſons. At length the two families ſeparated and retired to reſt, impatient to meet again the next morning. Sometimes they were lulled to repoſe by the beating rains, which fell in torrents upon the roof of their cottages; and ſometimes by the hollow winds, which brought to their ear the diſtant murmur of the waves breaking upon the ſhore. They bleſſed God for their perſonal ſafety, of which their

their feeling became ſtronger from the idea of remote danger.

Madame de la Tour occaſionally read aloud ſome affecting hiſtory of the old or new teſtament. Her auditors reaſoned but little upon thoſe ſacred books, for their theology conſiſted in ſentiment, like that of nature; and their morality in action, like that of the goſpel. Thoſe families had no particular days devoted to pleaſure, and others to ſadneſs. Every day was to them a holiday, and all which ſurrounded them one holy temple, where they for ever adored an Infinite Intelligence, the friend of human kind. A ſentiment of confidence in his ſupreme power filled their minds with conſolation under the paſt, with fortitude for the preſent, and with hope for the future. Thus, compelled by misfortune to return to a ſtate of nature, thoſe women had unfolded in their own boſoms, and in thoſe of their children, the feelings which are moſt natural to the human mind, and which are our beſt ſupport under evil.

But as clouds ſometimes ariſe which caſt a gloom over the beſt regulated tempers, whenever melancholy took poſſeſſion of any member of this little ſociety, the

the reſt endeavoured to baniſh painful thoughts rather by ſentiment than by arguments. Margaret exerted her gaiety. Madame de la Tour employed her mild theology. Virginia, her tender careſſes. Paul, his cordial and engaging frankneſs. Even Mary and Domingo haſtened to offer their ſuccour, and to weep with thoſe that wept. Thus weak plants are interwoven in order to reſiſt the tempeſts.

During the fine ſeaſon, they went every Sunday to the church of the Shaddock Grove, the ſteeple of which you ſee yonder upon the plain. After ſervice, the poor often came to require ſome kind office at their hands. Sometimes an unhappy creature ſought their advice, ſometimes a child led them to its ſick mother in the neighbourhood. They always took with them remedies for the ordinary diſeaſes of the country, which they adminiſtered in that ſoothing manner which ſtamps ſo much value upon the ſmalleſt favours. Above all, they ſucceeded in baniſhing the diſorders of the mind, which are ſo intolerable in ſolitude, and under the infirmities of a weakened frame. Madame de la Tour ſpoke with ſuch ſublime confidence of the Divinity, that the ſick, while liſtening to her, believed that he was preſent.

preſent. Virginia often returned home with her eyes wet with tears, and her heart overflowing with delight, having had an opportunity of doing good. After thoſe viſits of charity, they ſometimes prolonged their way by the Sloping Mountain, till they reached my dwelling, where I had prepared dinner for them, upon the banks of the little river which glides near my cottage. I produced on thoſe occaſions ſome bottles of old wine, in order to heighten the gaiety of our Indian repaſt by the cordial productions of Europe. Sometimes we met upon the ſea-ſhore, at the mouth of little rivers, which are here ſcarcely larger than brooks. We brought from the plantation our vegetable proviſions, to which we added ſuch as the ſea furniſhed in great variety. Seated upon a rock, beneath the ſhade of the velvet ſunflower, we heard the mountain billows break at our feet with a daſhing noiſe; and ſometimes on that ſpot we liſtened to the plaintive ſtrains of the water-curlew. Madame de la Tour anſwered his ſorrowful notes in the following ſonnet.

SONNET

SONNET

TO THE CURLEW.

Sooth'd by the murmurs on the ſea-beat ſhore,
His dun grey plumage floating to the gale,
The curlew blends his melancholy wail
With thoſe hoarſe ſounds the ruſhing waters pour.
Like thee, congenial bird! my ſteps explore
The bleak lone ſea-beach, or the rocky dale,
And ſhun the orange bower, the myrtle vale,
Whoſe gay luxuriance ſuits my ſoul no more.
I love the ocean's broad expanſe, when dreſt
In limpid clearneſs, or when tempeſts blow,
When the ſmooth currents on its placid breaſt
Flow calm as my paſt moments us'd to flow;
Or when its troubled waves refuſe to reſt,
And ſeem the ſymbol of my preſent woe.

Our repaſts were ſucceeded by the ſongs and dances of the two young people. Virginia ſung the happineſs of paſtoral life, and the miſery of thoſe who were impelled by avarice to croſs the furious ocean, rather than cultivate the earth, and enjoy its peaceful bounties. Sometimes ſhe performed a pantomime with Paul in the manner of the negroes. The firſt language of men is pantomime; it is known to all nations, and is ſo natural and ſo expreſſive, that the children of the European inhabitants catch it with facility from the negroes. Virginia recalling, amongſt the hiſtories which her mother had read to her, thoſe which had affected her moſt, repreſented the principal events with beautiful ſimplicity. Sometimes at the ſound of Domingo's tamtam ſhe appeared upon the green-ſward, bearing a pitcher upon her head, and advanced with a timid ſtep towards the ſource of a neighbouring fountain, to draw water. Domingo and Mary, who perſonated the ſhepherds of Midian, forbade her to approach, and repulſed her ſternly. Upon which Paul flew to her ſuccour, beat away the ſhepherds, filled Virginia's pitcher, and placing it upon her head, bound her brows at the ſame time with a wreath of the red flowers of the Madagaſcar periwinkle, which ſerved to heighten

the delicacy of her ſkin. Then joining their ſports, I took upon me the part of Raguel, and beſtowed upon Paul my daughter Zephora in marriage.

Sometimes Virginia repreſented the unfortunate Ruth, returning poor and widowed to her own country, where, after ſo long an abſence, ſhe found herſelf as in a foreign land. Domingo and Mary perſonated the reapers. Virginia followed their ſteps, gleaning here and there a few ears of corn. She was interrogated by Paul with the gravity of a patriarch, and anſwered, with a faltering voice, his queſtions. Soon touched with compaſſion, he granted an aſylum to innocence, and hoſpitality to misfortune. He filled Virginia's lap with plenty; and, leading her towards us as before the old men of the city, declared his purpoſe to take her in marriage. At this ſcene Madame de la Tour, recalling the deſolate ſituation in which ſhe had been left by her relations, her widowhood, the kind reception ſhe had met with from Margaret, ſucceeded by the ſoothing hope of a happy union between their children, could not forbear weeping; and the ſenſations which ſuch recollections excited, led the whole audience to pour forth thoſe luxurious

tears which have their mingled ſource in ſorrow and in joy.

Theſe dramas were performed with ſuch an air of reality, that you might have fancied yourſelf tranſported to the plains of Syria or of Paleſtine. We were not unfurniſhed with either decorations, lights, or an orcheſtra, ſuitable to the repreſentation. The ſcene was generally placed in an opening of the foreſt, where ſuch parts of the wood as were penetrable formed around us numerous arcades of foliage, beneath which we were ſheltered from the heat during the whole day: but when the ſun deſcended towards the horizon, its rays, broken upon the trunks of the trees, diverged amongſt the ſhadows of the foreſt in long lines of light, which produced the moſt ſublime effect. Sometimes the whole of its broad diſk appeared at the end of an avenue, ſpreading one dazzling maſs of brightneſs. The foliage of the trees, illuminated from beneath by its ſaffron beams, glowed with the luſtre of the topaz and the emerald. Their brown and moſſy trunks appeared transformed into columns of antique bronze; and the birds, who had retired in ſilence to their leafy ſhades to paſs the night, ſurpriſed to ſee the radiance of a ſecond morning,

morning, hailed the ſtar of day with innumerable carols.

Night ſoon overtook us during thoſe rural entertainments; but the purity of the air, and the mildneſs of the climate, admitted of our ſleeping in the woods, ſecure from the injuries of the weather, and no leſs ſecure from the moleſtation of robbers. At our return the following day to our reſpective habitations, we found them exactly in the ſame ſtate in which they had been left. In this iſland, which then had no commerce, there was ſo much ſimplicity and good faith, that the doors of ſeveral houſes were without a key, and a lock was an object of curioſity to many of the natives.

Amidſt the luxuriant beauty of this favoured climate, Madame de la Tour often regretted the quick ſucceſſion from day to night which takes place between the tropics, and which deprived her penſive mind of that hour of twilight, the ſoftened gloom of which is ſo ſoothing and ſacred to the feelings of tender melancholy. This regret is expreſſed in the following ſonnet.

SONNET

TO THE TORRID ZONE.

PATHWAY of light! o'er thy empurpled zone
With laviſh charms perennial ſummer ſtrays;
Soft 'midſt thy ſpicy groves the zephyr plays,
While far around the rich perfumes are thrown;
The amadavid-bird for thee alone
Spreads his gay plumes, that catch thy vivid rays:
For thee the gems with liquid luſtre blaze,
And Nature's various wealth is all thy own.
But, ah! not thine is twilight's doubtful gloom,
Thoſe mild gradations, mingling day with night;
Here inſtant darkneſs ſhrouds thy genial bloom,
Nor leaves my penſive ſoul that ling'ring light,
When muſing mem'ry would each trace reſume
Of fading pleaſures in ſucceſſive flight.

Paul and Virginia had neither clock nor almanack, or books of chronology, hiſtory, or philoſophy. The periods of their lives were regulated by thoſe of nature. They knew the hours of the day by the ſhadows of the trees, the ſeaſons by the times when thoſe trees bore flowers or fruit, and the years by the number of their harveſts. Theſe ſoothing images diffuſed an inexpreſſible charm over their converſation. "It is time to dine," ſaid Virginia; "the ſhadows of the plantain-trees are at their roots;" or, "night approaches; the tamarinds cloſe their leaves." "When will you come to ſee us?" inquired ſome of her companions in the neighbourhood. "At the time of the ſugar-canes," anſwered Virginia. "Your viſit will be then ſtill more delightful," reſumed her young acquaintances. When ſhe was aſked what was her own age, and that of Paul, "My brother," ſaid ſhe, "is as old as the great cocoa-tree of the fountain; and I am as old as the little cocoa-tree. The mangoes have borne fruit twelve times, and the orange-trees have borne flowers four and twenty times, ſince I came into the world." Their lives ſeemed linked to the trees like thoſe of fawns or dryads. They knew no other hiſtorical epochas than that of the lives of their mothers, no

other chronology than that of their orchards, and no other philoſophy than that of doing good, and reſigning themſelves to the will of Heaven.

Thus grew thoſe children of nature. No care had troubled their peace, no intemperance had corrupted their blood, no miſplaced paſſion had depraved their hearts. Love, innocence, and piety, poſſeſſed their ſouls; and thoſe intellectual graces unfolded themſelves in their features, their attitudes, and their motions. Still in the morning of life, they had all its blooming freſhneſs; and ſurely ſuch in the garden of Eden appeared our firſt parents, when, coming from the hands of God, they firſt ſaw, approached, and converſed together, like brother and ſiſter. Virginia was gentle, modeſt, and confiding as Eve; and Paul, like Adam, united the figure of manhood with the ſimplicity of a child.

When alone with Virginia, he has a thouſand times told me he uſed to ſay to her, at his return from labour, "When I am wearied, the ſight of you refreſhes me. If from the ſummit of the mountain I perceive you below in the valley, you appear to me in the midſt of our orchard like a bluſhing roſe-bud.

bud. If you go towards our mother's houſe, the partridge, when it runs to meet its young, has a ſhape leſs beautiful, and a ſtep leſs light. When I loſe ſight of you through the trees, I have no need to ſee you in order to find you again. Something of you, I know not how, remains for me in the air where you have paſſed, in the graſs where you have been ſeated. When I come near you, you delight all my ſenſes. The azure of heaven is leſs charming than the blue of your eyes, and the ſong of the amadavid-bird leſs ſoft than the ſound of your voice. If I only touch you with my finger, my whole frame trembles with pleaſure. Do you remember the day when we croſſed over the great ſtones of the river of the Three Peaks? I was very much tired before we reached the bank; but as ſoon as I had taken you in my arms, I ſeemed to have wings like a bird. Tell me by what charm you have ſo enchanted me? Is it by your wiſdom? Our mothers have more than either of us. Is it by your careſſes? They embrace me much oftener than you. I think it muſt be by your goodneſs. I ſhall never forget how you walked bare-footed to the Black River, to aſk pardon for the poor wandering ſlave. Here, my beloved! take this flowering orange-branch,

which I have culled in the foreſt; you will place it at night near your bed. Eat this honey-comb, which I have taken for you from the top of a rock. But firſt lean upon my boſom, and I ſhall be refreſhed."

Virginia then anſwered, "O, my dear brother, the rays of the ſun in the morning at the top of the rocks give me leſs joy than the ſight of you. I love my mother, I love yours; but when they call you their ſon, I love them a thouſand times more. When they careſs you, I feel it more ſenſibly than when I am careſſed myſelf. You aſk me why you love me. Why? all creatures that are brought up together love one another. Look at our birds reared up in the ſame neſts; they love like us: they are always together like us. Hark! how they call and anſwer from one tree to another. So when the echoes bring to my ear the airs which you play upon your flute at the top of the mountain, I repeat the words at the bottom of the valley. Above all, you are dear to me ſince the day when you wanted to fight the maſter of the ſlave for me. Since that time how often I have ſaid to myſelf, 'Ah, my brother has a good heart; but for him I ſhould have died of terror.' I pray to God every day for my mother and yours; for

for you, and for our poor ſervants; but when I pronounce your name, my devotion ſeems to increaſe, I aſk ſo earneſtly of God that no harm may befall you! Why do you go ſo far, and climb ſo high, to ſeek fruits and flowers for me? How much you are fatigued!" and with her little white handkerchief ſhe wiped the damps from his brow.

For ſome time paſt, however, Virginia had felt her heart agitated by new ſenſations. Her fine blue eyes loſt their luſtre, her cheek its freſhneſs, and her frame was ſeized with an univerſal languor. Serenity no longer ſat upon her brow, nor ſmiles played upon her lips. She became ſuddenly gay without joy, and melancholy without vexation. She fled her innocent ſports, her gentle labours, and the ſociety of her beloved family; wandering along the moſt unfrequented parts of the plantation, and ſeeking every where that reſt which ſhe could no where find. Sometimes at the ſight of Paul ſhe advanced ſportively towards him, and, when going to accoſt him, was ſeized with ſudden confuſion: her pale cheeks were overſpread with bluſhes, and her eyes no longer dared to meet thoſe of her brother. Paul ſaid to her, "The rocks are covered with verdure, our birds

birds begin to ſing when you approach, every thing around you is gay, and you only are unhappy." He endeavoured to ſooth her by his embraces; but ſhe turned away her head, and fled trembling towards her mother. The careſſes of her brother excited too much emotion in her agitated heart. Paul could not comprehend the meaning of thoſe new and ſtrange caprices.

One of thoſe ſummers, which ſometimes deſolate the countries ſituated between the tropics, now ſpread its ravages over this iſland. It was near the end of December, when the ſun at Capricorn darts over Mauritius during the ſpace of three weeks its vertical fires. The ſouth wind, which prevails almoſt throughout the whole year, no longer blew. Vaſt columns of duſt aroſe from the highways, and hung ſuſpended in the air; the ground was every where broken into clefts; the graſs was burnt; hot exhalations iſſued from the ſides of the mountains, and their rivulets for the moſt part became dry; fiery vapours during the day aſcended from the plains, and appeared at the ſetting of the ſun like a conflagration. Night brought no coolneſs to the heated atmoſphere: the orb of the moon ſeemed of blood, and, riſing in a miſty

a miſty horizon, appeared of ſupernatural magnitude. The drooping cattle on the ſides of the hills, ſtretching out their necks towards heaven, and panting for air, made the vallies re-echo with their melancholy lowings: even the Caffre, by whom they were led, threw himſelf upon the earth in ſearch of coolneſs; but the ſcorching ſun had every where penetrated, and the ſtifling atmoſphere reſounded with the buzzing noiſe of inſects, who ſought to allay their thirſt in the blood of men and of animals.

On one of thoſe ſultry nights Virginia, reſtleſs and unhappy, aroſe, then went again to reſt, but could find in no attitude either ſlumber or repoſe. At length ſhe bent her way by the light of the moon towards her fountain, and gazed at its ſpring, which, notwithſtanding the drought, ſtill flowed like ſilver threads down the brown ſides of the rock. She flung herſelf into the baſon; its coolneſs re-animated her ſpirits, and a thouſand ſoothing remembrances preſented themſelves to her mind. She recollected that in her infancy her mother and Margaret amuſed themſelves by bathing her with Paul in this very ſpot; that Paul afterwards, reſerving this bath for her uſe only, had dug its bed, covered the bottom with ſand,

and

and ſown aromatic herbs round the borders. She ſaw, reflected through the water upon her naked arms and boſom, the two cocoa-trees which were planted at her birth and that of her brother, and which interwove above her head their green branches and young fruit. She thought of Paul's friendſhip ſweeter than the odours, purer than the waters of the fountain, ſtronger than the intertwining palm-trees, and ſhe ſighed. Reflecting upon the hour of the night, and the profound ſolitude, her imagination again grew diſordered. Suddenly ſhe flew affrighted from thoſe dangerous ſhades, and thoſe waters which ſhe fancied hotter than the torrid ſun-beam, and ran to her mother in order to find a refuge from herſelf. Often, wiſhing to unfold her ſufferings, ſhe preſſed her mother's hands within her own; often ſhe was ready to pronounce the name of Paul; but her oppreſſed heart left not her lips the power of utterance; and, leaning her head on her mother's boſom, ſhe could only bathe it with her tears.

Madame de la Tour, though ſhe eaſily diſcerned the ſource of her daughter's uneaſineſs, did not think proper to ſpeak to her on that ſubject. "My dear child," ſaid ſhe, "addreſs yourſelf to God, who diſpoſes

diſpoſes at his will of health and of life. He tries you now in order to recompenſe you hereafter. Remember that we are only placed upon earth for the exerciſe of virtue."

The exceſſive heat drew vapours from the ocean, which hung over the iſland like a vaſt awning, and gathered round the ſummits of the mountains, while long flakes of fire occaſionally iſſued from their miſty peaks. Soon after the moſt terrible thunder re-echoed through the woods, the plains, and the vallies; the rains fell from the ſkies like cataracts; foaming torrents rolled down the ſides of this mountain; the bottom of the valley became a ſea; the plat of ground on which the cottages were built, a little iſland; and the entrance of this valley a ſluice, along which ruſhed precipitately the moaning waters, earth, trees, and rocks.

Meantime the trembling family addreſſed their prayers to God in the cottage of Madame de la Tour, the roof of which cracked horribly from the ſtruggling winds. So vivid and frequent were the lightnings, that, although the doors and window-ſhutters were well faſtened, every object without was diſtinctly

diſtinctly ſeen through the jointed beams. Paul, followed by Domingo, went with intrepidity from one cottage to another, notwithſtanding the fury of the tempeſt; here ſupporting a partition with a buttreſs, there driving in a ſtake, and only returning to the family to calm their fears by the hope that the ſtorm was paſſing away. Accordingly, in the evening the rains ceaſed, the trade-winds of the ſouth purſued their ordinary courſe, the tempeſtuous clouds were thrown towards the north-eaſt, and the ſetting ſun appeared in the horizon.

Virginia's firſt wiſh was to viſit the ſpot called her *repoſe*. Paul approached her with a timid air, and offered her the aſſiſtance of his arm, which ſhe accepted, ſmiling, and they left the cottage together. The air was freſh and clear; white vapours aroſe from the ridges of the mountains, furrowed here and there by the foam of the torrents, which were now becoming dry. The garden was altogether deſtroyed by the hollows which the floods had worn, the roots of the fruit-trees were for the moſt part laid bare, and vaſt heaps of ſand covered the chain of meadows, and choaked up Virginia's bath. The two cocoa-trees, however, were ſtill erect, and ſtill retained their

their freſhneſs; but they were no longer ſurrounded by turf, or arbours, or birds, except a few amadavid-birds, who, upon the points of the neighbouring rocks, lamented in plaintive notes the loſs of their young.

At the ſight of this general deſolation, Virginia exclaimed to Paul, "You brought birds hither, and the hurricane has killed them. You planted this garden, and it is now deſtroyed. Every thing then upon earth periſhes, and it is only heaven that is not ſubject to change." "Why," anſwered Paul, "why cannot I give you ſomething which belongs to heaven? But I am poſſeſſed of nothing even upon earth." Virginia bluſhing, reſumed, "You have the picture of Saint Paul." Scarcely had ſhe pronounced the words, when he flew in ſearch of it to his mother's cottage. This picture was a ſmall miniature, repreſenting Paul the Hermit, and which Margaret, who was very pious, had long worn hung at her neck when ſhe was a girl, and which, ſince ſhe became a mother, ſhe had placed round the neck of her child. It had even happened, that being, while pregnant, abandoned by the whole world, and continually employed in contemplating

the image of this benevolent recluſe, her offspring had contracted, at leaſt ſo ſhe fancied, ſome reſemblance to this revered object. She therefore beſtowed upon him the name of Paul, giving him for his patron a ſaint who had paſſed his life far from mankind, by whom he had been firſt deceived, and then forſaken. Virginia, upon receiving this little picture from the hands of Paul, ſaid to him with emotion, "My dear brother, I will never part with this while I live; nor will I ever forget that you have given me the only thing which you poſſeſs in the world." At this tone of friendſhip, this unhoped-for return of familiarity and tenderneſs, Paul attempted to embrace her; but light as a bird ſhe fled, and left him aſtoniſhed, and unable to account for a conduct ſo extraordinary.

Meanwhile Margaret ſaid to Madame de la Tour, "Why do we not unite our children by marriage? They have a tender attachment for each other." Madame de la Tour replied, "They are too young, and too poor. What grief would it occaſion us to ſee Virginia bring into the world unfortunate children, whom ſhe would not perhaps have ſufficient ſtrength to rear! Your negro Domingo is almoſt too old

old to labour; Mary is infirm. As for myſelf, my dear friend, in the ſpace of fifteen years, I find my ſtrength much failed: age advances rapidly in hot climates, and, above all, under the preſſure of misfortune. Paul is our only hope: let us wait till his conſtitution is ſtrengthened, and till he can ſupport us by his labour: at preſent you well know that we have only ſufficient to ſupply the wants of the day: but were we to ſend Paul for a ſhort time to the Indies, commerce would furniſh him with the means of purchaſing a ſlave; and at his return we will unite him to Virginia; for I am perſuaded no one on earth can render her ſo happy as your ſon. We will conſult our neighbour on this ſubject."

They accordingly aſked my advice, and I was of their opinion. "The Indian ſeas," I obſerved to them, "are calm; and, in chooſing a favourable ſeaſon, the voyage is ſeldom longer than ſix weeks. We will furniſh Paul with a little venture in my neighbourhood, where he is much beloved. If we were only to ſupply him with ſome raw cotton, of which we make no uſe, for want of mills to work it, ſome ebony, which is here ſo common that it ſerves us for firing, and ſome roſin, which is found in our

woods, all thoſe articles will ſell advantageouſly in the Indies, though to us they are uſeleſs."

I engaged to obtain permiſſion from Monſieur de la Bourdonnais to undertake this voyage; but I determined previouſly to mention the affair to Paul; and my ſurpriſe was great when this young man ſaid to me, with a degree of good ſenſe above his age, "And why do you wiſh me to leave my family for this precarious purſuit of Fortune? Is there any commerce more advantageous than the culture of the ground, which yields ſometimes fifty or a hundred fold? If we wiſh to engage in commerce, we can do ſo by carrying our ſuperfluities to the town, without my wandering to the Indies. Our mothers tell me, that Domingo is old and feeble, but I am young, and gather ſtrength every day. If any accident ſhould happen during my abſence, above all, to Virginia, who already ſuffers.—Oh, no, no!—I cannot reſolve to leave them."

This anſwer threw me into great perplexity; for Madame de la Tour had not concealed from me the ſituation of Virginia, and her deſire of ſeparating

thoſe

thoſe young people for a few years. Theſe ideas I did not dare to ſuggeſt to Paul.

At this period a ſhip, which arrived from France, brought Madame de la Tour a letter from her aunt. Alarmed by the terrors of approaching death, which could alone penetrate a heart ſo inſenſible, recovering from a dangerous diſorder which had left her in a ſtate of weakneſs, rendered incurable by age, ſhe deſired that her niece would return to France; or, if her health forbade her to undertake ſo long a voyage, ſhe conjured her to ſend Virginia, on whom ſhe would beſtow a good education, procure for her a ſplendid marriage, and leave her the inheritance of her whole fortune. The peruſal of this letter ſpread general conſternation through the family. Domingo and Mary began to weep. Paul, motionleſs with ſurpriſe, appeared as if his heart was ready to burſt with indignation; while Virginia, fixing her eyes upon her mother, had not power to utter a word.

"And can you now leave us?" cried Margaret to Madame de la Tour. "No, my dear friend, no, my beloved children," replied Madame de la Tour; "I will not leave you. I have lived with you, and

with you I will die. I have known no happineſs but in your affection. If my health be deranged, my paſt misfortunes are the cauſe. My heart, deeply wounded by the cruelty of a relation, and the loſs of my huſband, has found more conſolation and felicity with you beneath theſe humble huts, than all the wealth of my family could now give me in my own country."

At this ſoothing language every eye overflowed with tears of delight. Paul, preſſing Madame de la Tour in his arms, exclaimed, "Neither will I leave you! I will not go to the Indies. We will all labour for you, my dear mother; and you ſhall never feel any wants with us." But of the whole ſociety, the perſon who diſplayed the leaſt tranſport, and who probably felt the moſt, was Virginia; and, during the remainder of the day, that gentle gaiety which flowed from her heart, and proved that her peace was reſtored, completed the general ſatisfaction.

The next day, at ſun-riſe, while they were offering up, as uſual, their morning ſacrifice of praiſe, which preceded their breakfaſt, Domingo informed them

them that a gentleman on horſeback, followed by two ſlaves, was coming towards the plantation. This perſon was Monſieur de la Bourdonnais. He entered the cottage, where he found the family at breakfaſt. Virginia had prepared, according to the cuſtom of the country, coffee and rice boiled in water; to which ſhe added hot yams, and freſh cocoas. The leaves of the plantain-tree ſupplied the want of table linen; and calbaſſia-ſhells, ſplit in two, ſerved for utenſils. The governor expreſſed ſome ſurpriſe at the homelineſs of the dwelling: then, addreſſing himſelf to Madame de la Tour, he obſerved that, although public affairs drew his attention too much from the concerns of individuals, ſhe had many claims to his good offices. "You have an aunt at Paris, Madam," he added, "a woman of quality, and immenſely rich, who expects that you will haſten to ſee her, and who means to beſtow upon you her whole fortune." Madame de la Tour replied, that the ſtate of her health would not permit her to undertake ſo long a voyage. "At leaſt," reſumed Monſieur de la Bourdonnais, "you cannot, without injuſtice, deprive this amiable young lady, your daughter, of ſo noble an inheritance. I will not conceal from you, that your aunt has made uſe

of her influence to oblige you to return, and that I have received official letters, in which I am ordered to exert my authority, if neceſſary, to that effect. But, as I only wiſh to employ my power for the purpoſe of rendering the inhabitants of this colony happy, I expect from your good ſenſe the voluntary ſacrifice of a few years, upon which depend your daughter's eſtabliſhment in the world, and the welfare of your whole life. Wherefore do we come to theſe iſlands? Is it not to acquire a fortune? And will it not be more agreeable to return and find it in your own country?"

He then placed a great bag of piaſters, which had been brought hither by one of his ſlaves, upon the table. "This," added he, "is allotted by your aunt for the preparations neceſſary for the young lady's voyage." Gently reproaching Madame de la Tour for not having had recourſe to him in her difficulties, he extolled at the ſame time her noble fortitude. Upon this Paul ſaid to the governor, "My mother did addreſs herſelf to you, Sir, and you received her ill." "Have you another child, Madam?" ſaid Monſieur de la Bourdonnais to Madame de la Tour. "No, Sir," ſhe replied: "this

is

is the child of my friend; but he and Virginia are equally dear to us." "Young man," ſaid the governor to Paul, "when you have acquired a little experience of the world, you will know that it is the misfortune of people in place to be deceived, and thence to beſtow upon intriguing vice that which belongs to modeſt merit."

Monſieur de la Bourdonnais, at the requeſt of Madame de la Tour, placed himſelf next her at table, and breakfaſted in the manner of the creoles, upon coffee mixed with rice, boiled in water. He was delighted with the order and neatneſs which prevailed in the little cottage, the harmony of the two intereſting families, and the zeal of their old ſervants. "Here," exclaimed he, "I diſcern only wooden furniture, but I find ſerene countenances, and hearts of gold." Paul, enchanted with the affability of the governor, ſaid to him, "I wiſh to be your friend; you are a good man." Monſieur de la Bourdonnais received with pleaſure this inſular compliment, and, taking Paul by the hand, aſſured him that he might rely upon his friendſhip."

After breakfaſt he took Madame de la Tour aſide, and informed her that an opportunity preſented itſelf of ſending her daughter to France in a ſhip which was going to ſail in a ſhort time; that he would recommend her to a lady, a relation of his own, who would be a paſſenger; and that ſhe muſt not think of renouncing an immenſe fortune, on account of being ſeparated from her daughter a few years. "Your aunt," he added, "cannot live more than two years: of this I am aſſured by her friends. Think of it ſeriouſly. Fortune does not viſit us every day. Conſult your friends. Every perſon of good ſenſe will be of my opinion." She anſwered that, "deſiring no other happineſs henceforth in the world than that of her daughter, ſhe would leave her departure for France entirely to her own inclination."

Madame de la Tour was not ſorry to find an opportunity of ſeparating Paul and Virginia for a ſhort time, and provide by this means for their mutual felicity at a future period. She took her daughter aſide, and ſaid to her, "My dear child, our ſervants are now old. Paul is ſtill very young. Margaret is advanced in years, and I am already infirm. If I ſhould die, what will become of you, without fortune,

fortune, in the midſt of theſe deſerts? You will then be left alone, without any perſon who can afford you much ſuccour, and forced to labour without ceaſing, in order to ſupport your wretched exiſtence. This idea fills my ſoul with ſorrow." Virginia anſwered, "God has appointed us to labour. You have taught me to labour, and to bleſs him every day. He never has forſaken us, he never will forſake us. His providence peculiarly watches over the unfortunate. You have told me this often, my dear mother! I cannot reſolve to leave you." Madame de la Tour replied, with much emotion, "I have no other aim than to render you happy, and to marry you one day to Paul, who is not your brother. Reflect at preſent that his fortune depends upon you."

A young girl who loves, believes that all the world is ignorant of her paſſion; ſhe throws over her eyes the veil which ſhe has thrown over her heart: but when it is lifted up by ſome cheriſhing hand, the ſecret inquietudes of paſſion ſuddenly burſt their bounds, and the ſoothing overflowings of confidence ſucceed that reſerve and myſtery, with which the oppreſſed heart had enveloped its feelings. Virginia, deeply

deeply affected by this new proof of her mother's tenderneſs, related to her how cruel had been thoſe ſtruggles which Heaven alone had witneſſed; declared that ſhe ſaw the ſuccour of Providence in that of an affectionate mother, who approved of her attachment, and would guide her by her counſels; that being now ſtrengthened by ſuch ſupport, every conſideration led her to remain with her mother, without anxiety for the preſent, and without apprehenſion for the future.

Madame de la Tour, perceiving that this confidential converſation had produced an effect altogether different from that which ſhe expected, ſaid, "My dear child, I will not any more conſtrain your inclination: deliberate at leiſure, but conceal your feelings from Paul."

Towards evening, when Madame de la Tour and Virginia were again together, their confeſſor, who was a miſſionary in the iſland, entered the room, having been ſent by the governor. "My children," he exclaimed as he entered, "God be praiſed! you are now rich. You can now liſten to the kind ſuggeſtions of your excellent hearts, and do good to the

the poor. I know what Monſieur de la Bourdonnais has ſaid to you, and what you have anſwered. Your health, dear Madam, obliges you to remain here; but you, young lady, are without excuſe. We muſt obey the will of Providence; and we muſt alſo obey our aged relations, even when they are unjuſt. A ſacrifice is required of you; but it is the order of God. He devoted himſelf for you; and you, in imitation of his example, muſt devote yourſelf for the welfare of your family. Your voyage to France will have a happy termination. You will ſurely conſent to go, my dear young lady?"

Virginia, with downcaſt eyes, anſwered trembling, "If it be the command of God, I will not preſume to oppoſe it. Let the will of God be done!" ſaid ſhe, weeping.

The prieſt went away, and informed the governor of the ſucceſs of his miſſion. In the mean time Madame de la Tour ſent Domingo to deſire I would come hither, that ſhe might conſult me upon Virginia's departure. I was of opinion that ſhe ought not to go. I conſider it as a fixed principle of happineſs, that we ought to prefer the advantages of nature

ture to thoſe of fortune; and never go in ſearch of that at a diſtance, which we may find within our own boſoms. But what could be expected from my moderate counſels, oppoſed to the illuſions of a ſplendid fortune; and my ſimple reaſoning, contradicted by the prejudices of the world, and an authority which Madame de la Tour held ſacred? This lady had only conſulted me from a ſentiment of reſpect, and had, in reality, ceaſed to deliberate ſince ſhe had heard the deciſion of her confeſſor. Margaret herſelf, who, notwithſtanding the advantages ſhe hoped for her ſon from the poſſeſſion of Virginia's fortune, had hitherto oppoſed her departure, made no further objections. As for Paul, ignorant of what was decided, and alarmed at the ſecret converſation which Madame de la Tour held with her daughter, he abandoned himſelf to deep melancholy. "They are plotting ſomething againſt my peace," cried he, "ſince they are ſo careful of concealment."

A report having in the mean time been ſpread over the iſland, that fortune had viſited thoſe rocks, we beheld merchants of all kinds climbing their ſteep aſcent, and diſplaying in thoſe humble huts the richeſt ſtuffs of India. The fine dimity of Gondelore; the handkerchiefs

handkerchiefs of Pellicate and Muſſulapatan; the plain, ſtriped, and embroidered muſlins of Dacca, clear as the day. Thoſe merchants unrolled the gorgeous ſilks of China, white ſatin-damaſks, others of graſs-green and bright red; roſe-coloured taffetas, a profuſion of ſatins, pelongs, and gauze of Tonquin, ſome plain, and ſome beautifully decorated with flowers; the ſoft pekins, downy like cloth; white and yellow nankeens, and the callicoes of Madagaſcar.

Madame de la Tour wiſhed her daughter to purchaſe every thing ſhe liked; and Virginia made choice of whatever ſhe believed would be agreeable to her mother, Margaret, and her ſon. "This," ſaid ſhe, "will ſerve for furniture, and that will be uſeful to Mary and Domingo." In ſhort, the bag of piaſters was emptied before ſhe had conſidered her own wants; and ſhe was obliged to receive a ſhare of the preſents which ſhe had diſtributed to the family circle.

Paul, penetrated with ſorrow at the ſight of thoſe gifts of fortune, which he felt were the preſage of Virginia's departure, came a few days after to my

dwelling. With an air of deſpondency he ſaid to me, "My ſiſter is going: they are already making preparations for her voyage. I conjure you to come and exert your influence over her mother and mine, in order to detain her here." I could not refuſe the young man's ſolicitations, although well convinced that my repreſentations would be unavailing.

If Virginia had appeared to me charming when clad in the blue cloth of Bengal, with a red handkerchief tied round her head, how much was her beauty improved, when decorated with the graceful ornaments worn by the ladies of this country! She was dreſſed in white muſlin, lined with roſe-coloured taffeta. Her ſmall and elegant ſhape was diſplayed to advantage by her corſet, and the laviſh profuſion of her light treſſes were careleſsly blended with her ſimple head-dreſs. Her fine blue eyes were filled with an expreſſion of melancholy; and the ſtruggles of paſſion, with which her heart was agitated, fluſhed her cheek, and gave her voice a tone of emotion. The contraſt between her penſive look and her gay habiliments, rendered her more intereſting than ever, nor was it poſſible to ſee or hear her unmoved. Paul became more and more melancholy; and at length Margaret,

Margaret, diſtreſſed by the ſituation of her ſon, took him aſide, and ſaid to him, "Why, my dear ſon, will you cheriſh vain hopes, which will only render your diſappointment more bitter? It is time that I ſhould make known to you the ſecret of your life and of mine. Mademoiſelle de la Tour belongs by her mother to a rich and noble family, while you are but the ſon of a poor peaſant-girl; and, what is worſe, you are a natural child."

Paul, who had never before heard this laſt expreſſion, inquired with eagerneſs its meaning. His mother replied, "You had no legitimate father. When I was a girl, ſeduced by love, I was guilty of a weakneſs of which you are the offspring. My fault deprived you of the protection of a father's family, and my flight from home, of that of a mother's family. Unfortunate child! you have no relation in the world but me!" And ſhe ſhed a flood of tears. Paul, preſſing her in his arms, exclaimed, "Oh, my dear mother! ſince I have no relation in the world but you, I will love you ſtill more! But what a ſecret have you diſcloſed to me! I now ſee the reaſon why Mademoiſelle de la Tour has eſtranged herſelf from me for two months paſt, and why ſhe

has determined to go. Ah! I perceive too well that ſhe deſpiſes me!"

The hour of ſupper being arrived, we placed ourſelves at table; but the different ſenſations with which we were all agitated left us little inclination to eat, and the meal paſſed in ſilence. Virginia firſt went out, and ſeated herſelf on the very ſpot where we now are placed. Paul haſtened after her, and ſeated himſelf by her ſide. It was one of thoſe delicious nights which are ſo common between the tropics, and the beauty of which no pencil can trace. The moon appeared in the midſt of the firmament, curtained in clouds, which her beams gradually diſpelled. Her light inſenſibly ſpread itſelf over the mountains of the iſland, and their peaks gliſtened with a ſilvered green. The winds were perfectly ſtill. We heard along the woods, at the bottom of the vallies, and on the ſummits of the rocks, the weak cry and the ſoft murmurs of the birds, exulting in the brightneſs of the night, and the ſerenity of the atmoſphere. The hum of inſects was heard in the graſs. The ſtars ſparkled in the heavens, and their trembling and lucid orbs were reflected upon the boſom of the ocean. Virginia's eyes wandered

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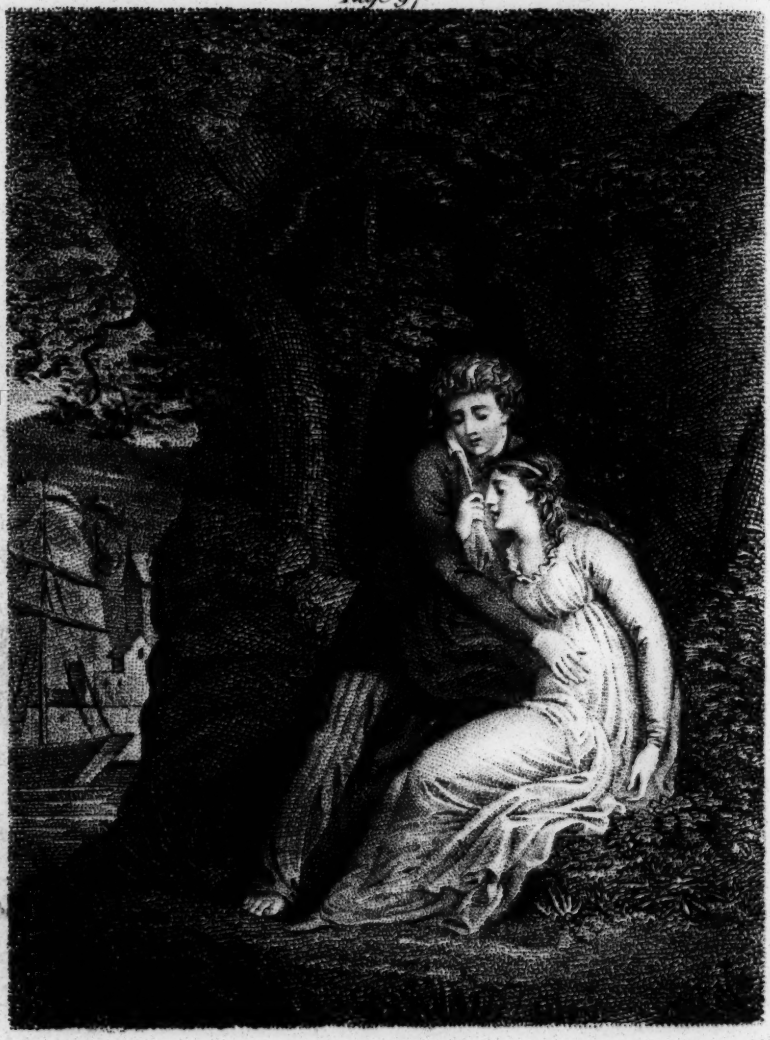

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dered over its vaſt and gloomy horizon, diſtinguiſhable from the bay of the iſland by the red fires in the fiſhing boats. She perceived at the entrance of the harbour a light and a ſhadow: theſe were the watch-light and the body of the veſſel in which ſhe was to embark for Europe, and which, ready to ſet ſail, lay at anchor, waiting for the wind. Affected at this ſight, ſhe turned away her head, in order to hide her tears from Paul.

Madame de la Tour, Margaret, and myſelf, were ſeated at a little diſtance beneath the plantain-trees; and amidſt the ſtillneſs of the night we diſtinctly heard their converſation, which I have not forgotten.

Paul ſaid to her, "You are going, they tell me, in three days. You do not fear then to encounter the dangers of the ſea, at which you are ſo much terrified?" "I muſt fulfil my duty," anſwered Virginia, "by obeying my parent." "You leave us," reſumed Paul, "for a diſtant relation, whom you have never ſeen." "Alas!" cried Virginia, "I would have remained my whole life here, but my mother would not have it ſo. My confeſſor told

me that it was the will of God I ſhould go, and that life was a trial!"

"What!" exclaimed Paul, "you have found ſo many reaſons then for going, and not one for remaining here! Ah! there is one reaſon for your departure, which you have not mentioned. Riches have great attractions. You will ſoon find in the new world, to which you are going, another, to whom you will give the name of brother, which you will beſtow on me no more. You will chooſe that brother from amongſt perſons who are worthy of you by their birth, and by a fortune which I have not to offer. But where will you go in order to be happier? On what ſhore will you land which will be dearer to you than the ſpot which gave you birth? Where will you find a ſociety more intereſting to you than this by which you are ſo beloved? How will you bear to live without your mother's careſſes, to which you are ſo accuſtomed? What will become of her, already advanced in years, when ſhe will no longer ſee you at her ſide at table, in the houſe, in the walks where ſhe uſed to lean upon you? What will become of my mother, who loves you with the ſame affection? What ſhall I ſay to comfort them

them when I ſee them weeping for your abſence? Cruel! I ſpeak not to you of myſelf; but what will become of me when in the morning I ſhall no more ſee you; when the evening will come, and will not re-unite us? When I ſhall gaze on the two palm-trees planted at our birth, and ſo long the witneſſes of our mutual friendſhip? Ah! ſince a new deſtiny attracts you, ſince you ſeek in a country, diſtant from your own, other poſſeſſions than thoſe which were the fruits of my labour, let me accompany you in the veſſel in which you are going to embark. I will animate your courage in the midſt of thoſe tempeſts at which you are ſo terrified even on ſhore. I will lay your head on my boſom. I will warm your heart upon my own; and in France, where you go in ſearch of fortune and of grandeur, I will attend you as your ſlave. Happy only in your happineſs, you will find me in thoſe palaces where I ſhall ſee you cheriſhed and adored, at leaſt ſufficiently noble to make for you the greateſt of all ſacrifices by dying at your feet."

The violence of his emotion ſtifled his voice, and we then heard that of Virginia, which, broken by ſobs, uttered theſe words: "It is for you I go: for

you, whom I ſee every day bent beneath the labour of ſuſtaining two infirm families. If I have accepted this opportunity of becoming rich, it is only to return you a thouſand fold the good which you have done us. Is there any fortune worthy of your friendſhip? Why do you talk to me of your birth? Ah! if it was again poſſible to give me a brother, ſhould I make choice of any other than you? Oh, Paul! Paul! you are far dearer to me than a brother! How much has it coſt me to avoid you! Help me to tear myſelf from what I value more than exiſtence, till Heaven can bleſs our union. But I will ſtay or go; I will live or die; diſpoſe of me as you will. Unhappy, that I am! I could reſiſt your careſſes, but I am unable to ſupport your affliction."

At thoſe words Paul ſeized her in his arms, and, holding her preſſed faſt to his boſom, cried, in a piercing tone, "I will go with her; nothing ſhall divide us." We ran towards him; and Madame de la Tour ſaid to him "My ſon, if you go, what will become of us?"

He trembling repeated the words, "My ſon!—My ſon!—You my mother!" cried he; "you, who would

would ſeparate the brother from the ſiſter! We have both been nouriſhed at your boſom; we have both been reared upon your knees; we have learnt of you to love each other; we have ſaid ſo a thouſand times; and now you would ſeparate her from me! You ſend her to Europe, that barbarous country which refuſed you an aſylum, and to relations by whom you were abandoned. You will tell me that I have no rights over her, and that ſhe is not my ſiſter. She is every thing to me, riches, birth, family, my ſole good! I know no other. We have had but one roof, one cradle, and we will have but one grave. If ſhe goes, I will follow her. The governor will prevent me? Will he prevent me from flinging myſelf into the ſea? Will he prevent me from following her by ſwimming? The ſea cannot be more fatal to me than the land. Since I cannot live with her, at leaſt I will die before her eyes: far from you, inhuman mother! woman without compaſſion! May the ocean, to which you truſt her, reſtore her to you no more! May the waves, rolling back our corpſe' amidſt the ſtones of the beach, give you in the loſs of your two children an eternal ſubject of remorſe!"

At theſe words I ſeized him in my arms, for deſpair had deprived him of reaſon. His eyes flaſhed fire, big drops of ſweat hung upon his face, his knees trembled, and I felt his heart beat violently againſt his burning boſom.

Virginia, affrighted, ſaid to him, "Oh, my friend! I call to witneſs the pleaſures of our early age, your ſorrow and my own, and every thing that can for ever bind two unfortunate beings to each other, that if I remain, I will live but for you; that if I go, I will one day return to be yours. I call you all to witneſs, you who have reared my infancy, who diſpoſe of my life, who ſee my tears. I ſwear by that Heaven which hears me, by the ſea which I am going to paſs, by the air I breathe, and which I never ſullied by a falſehood."

As the ſun ſoftens and diſſolves an icy rock upon the ſummit of the Appennines, ſo the impetuous paſſions of the young man were ſubdued by the voice of her he loved. He bent his head, and a flood of tears fell from his eyes. His mother, mingling her tears with his, held him in her arms, but was unable to ſpeak. Madame de la Tour, half diſtracted, ſaid

to me, "I can bear this no longer. My heart is broken. This unfortunate voyage ſhall not take place. Do take my ſon home with you. It is eight days ſince any one here has ſlept."

I ſaid to Paul, "My dear friend, your ſiſter will remain. To-morrow we will ſpeak to the governor; leave your family to take ſome reſt, and come and paſs the night with me."

He ſuffered himſelf to be led away in ſilence; and, after a night of great agitation, he aroſe at break of day, and returned home.

But why ſhould I continue any longer the recital of this hiſtory? There is never but one aſpect of human life which we can contemplate with pleaſure. Like the globe upon which we revolve, our fleeting courſe is but a day; and if one part of that day be viſited by light, the other is thrown into darkneſs.

"Father," I anſwered, "finiſh, I conjure you, the hiſtory which you have begun in a manner ſo intereſting. If the images of happineſs are moſt pleaſ-

ing, thoſe of misfortune are moſt inſtructive. Tell me what became of the unhappy young man."

The firſt object which Paul beheld in his way home was Mary, who, mounted upon a rock, was earneſtly looking towards the ſea. As ſoon as he perceived her, he called to her from a diſtance, "Where is Virginia?" Mary turned her head towards her young maſter, and began to weep. Paul, diſtracted, and treading back his ſteps, ran to the harbour. He was there informed, that Virginia had embarked at break of day, that the veſſel had immediately after ſet ſail, and could no longer be diſcerned. He inſtantly returned to the plantation, which he croſſed without uttering a word.

Although the pile of rocks behind us appears almoſt perpendicular, thoſe green platforms which ſeparate their ſummits are ſo many ſtages, by means of which you may reach, through ſome difficult paths, that cone of hanging and inacceſſible rocks called the Thumb. At the foot of that cone is a ſtretching ſlope of ground, covered with lofty trees, and which is ſo high and ſteep, that it appears like a foreſt in air, ſurrounded by tremendous precipices. The clouds,

clouds, which are attracted round the ſummit of thoſe rocks, ſupply innumerable rivulets, which ruſh from ſo immenſe a height into that deep valley ſituated behind the mountain, that from this elevated point we do not hear the ſound of their fall. On that ſpot you can diſcern a conſiderable part of the iſland with its precipices crowned with their majeſtic peaks; and, amongſt others, Peterbath, and the Three Peaks, with their valley filled with woods. You alſo command an extenſive view of the ocean, and even perceive the Iſle of Bourbon forty leagues towards the weſt. From the ſummit of that ſtupendous pile of rocks Paul gazed upon the veſſel which had borne away Virginia, and which now, ten leagues out at ſea, appeared like a black ſpot in the midſt of the ocean. He remained a great part of the day with his eyes fixed upon this object: when it had diſappeared, he ſtill fancied he beheld it: and when, at length, the traces which clung to his imagination were loſt amidſt the gathering miſts of the horizon, he ſeated himſelf on that wild point, for ever beaten by the winds, which never ceaſe to agitate the tops of the cabbage and gum-trees, and the hoarſe and moaning murmurs of which, ſimilar to the diſtant ſounds of organs, inſpire a deep melancholy. On that

that ſpot I found Paul, with his head reclined on the rock, and his eyes fixed upon the ground. I had followed him ſince break of day, and, after much importunity, I prevailed with him to deſcend from the heights, and return to his family. I conducted him to the plantation, where the firſt impulſe of his mind, upon ſeeing Madame de la Tour, was to reproach her bitterly for having deceived him. Madame de la Tour told us, that a favourable wind having aroſe at three o'clock in the morning, and the veſſel being ready to ſet ſail, the governor, attended by his general officers and the miſſionary, had come with a palanquin in ſearch of Virginia; and that, notwithſtanding her own objections, her tears, and thoſe of Margaret, all the while exclaiming that it was for the general welfare, they had carried away Virginia almoſt dying. "At leaſt," cried Paul, "if I had bid her farewell, I ſhould now be more calm. I would have ſaid to her, 'Virginia, if, during the time we have lived together, one word may have eſcaped me which has offended you, before you leave me for ever, tell me that you forgive me.' I would have ſaid to her, 'Since I am deſtined to ſee you no more, farewell, my dear Virginia, farewell! Live far from me contented and happy!"

When

When he ſaw that his mother and Madame de la Tour were weeping, "You muſt now," ſaid he, "ſeek ſome other than me to wipe away your tears:" and then, ruſhing out of the houſe, he wandered up and down the plantation. He flew eagerly to thoſe ſpots which had been moſt dear to Virginia. He ſaid to the goats and their kids, who followed him bleating, "What do you aſk of me? You will ſee her no more who uſed to feed you with her own hand." He went to the bower called the Repoſe of Virginia; and, as the birds flew around him, exclaimed, "Poor little birds! you will fly no more to meet her who cheriſhed you!" and, obſerving Fidele running backwards and forwards in ſearch of her, he heaved a deep ſigh, and cried, "Ah! you will never find her again." At length he went and ſeated himſelf upon the rock where he had converſed with her the preceding evening; and at the view of the ocean, upon which he had ſeen the veſſel diſappear which bore her away, he wept bitterly.

We continually watched his ſteps, apprehending ſome fatal conſequence from the violent agitation of his mind. His mother and Madame de la Tour conjured him in the moſt tender manner not to increaſe their

their affliction by his deſpair. At length Madame de la Tour ſoothed his mind by laviſhing upon him ſuch epithets as were beſt calculated to revive his hopes. She called him her ſon, her dear ſon, whom ſhe deſtined for her daughter. She prevailed with him to return to the houſe, and receive a little nouriſhment. He ſeated himſelf with us at table, next to the place which uſed to be occupied by the companion of his childhood, and, as if ſhe had ſtill been preſent, he ſpoke to her, and offered whatever he knew was moſt agreeable to her taſte; and then ſtarting from this dream of fancy, he began to weep. For ſome days he employed himſelf in gathering together every thing which had belonged to Virginia; the laſt noſegays ſhe had worn, the cocoa-ſhell in which ſhe uſed to drink; and after kiſſing a thouſand times thoſe relics of his friend, to him the moſt precious treaſures which the world contained, he hid them in his boſom. The ſpreading perfumes of the amber are not ſo ſweet as the objects which have belonged to thoſe we love. At length, perceiving that his anguiſh increaſed that of his mother and Madame de la Tour, and that the wants of the family required continual labour, he began, with the aſſiſtance of Domingo, to repair the garden.

Soon

Soon after this young man, till now indifferent as a creole with reſpect to what was paſſing in the world, deſired I would teach him to read and write, that he might carry on a correſpondence with Virginia. He then wiſhed to be inſtructed in geography, in order that he might form a juſt idea of the country where ſhe had diſembarked; and in hiſtory, that he might know the manners of the ſociety in which ſhe was placed. The powerful ſentiment of love, which directed his preſent ſtudies, had already taught him the arts of agriculture, and the manner of laying out the moſt irregular grounds with advantage and beauty. It muſt be admitted, that to the fond dreams of this reſtleſs and ardent paſſion, mankind are indebted for a great number of arts and ſciences, while its diſappointments have given birth to philoſophy, which teaches us to bear the evils of life with reſignation. Thus, nature having made love the general link which binds all beings, has rendered it the firſt ſpring of ſociety, the firſt incitement to knowledge as well as pleaſure.

Paul found little ſatisfaction in the ſtudy of geography, which, inſtead of deſcribing the natural hiſtory of each country, only gave a view of its political

litical boundaries. Hiſtory, and eſpecially modern hiſtory, intereſted him little more. He there ſaw only general and periodical evils, of which he did not diſcern the cauſe; wars for which there was no reaſon, and no object; nations without principle, and princes without humanity. He preferred the reading of romances, which being filled with the particular feelings and intereſts of men, repreſented ſituations ſimilar to his own. No book gave him ſo much pleaſure as Telemachus, from the pictures which it draws of paſtoral life, and of thoſe paſſions which are natural to the human heart. He read aloud to his mother and Madame de la Tour thoſe parts which affected him moſt ſenſibly, when, ſometimes touched by the moſt tender remembrances, his emotion choaked his utterance, and his eyes were bathed in tears. He fancied he had found in Virginia the wiſdom of Antiope, with the misfortunes and the tenderneſs of Eucharis. With very different ſenſations he peruſed our faſhionable novels, filled with licentious maxims and manners. And when he was informed that thoſe romances drew a juſt picture of European ſociety, he trembled, not without reaſon, leſt Virginia ſhould become corrupted, and ſhould forget him.

More than a year and a half had indeed paſſed away, before Madame de la Tour received any tidings of her daughter. During that period ſhe had only accidentally heard that Virginia had arrived ſafely in France. At length a veſſel, which ſtopped in its way to the Indies, conveyed to Madame de la Tour a packet, and a letter written with her own hand. Although this amiable young woman had written in a guarded manner, in order to avoid wounding the feelings of her mother, it was eaſy to diſcern that ſhe was unhappy. Her letter points ſo naturally her ſituation and her character, that I have retained it almoſt word for word.

"My dear and moſt beloved mother, I have already ſent you ſeveral letters, written with my own hand, but, having received no anſwer, I fear they have not reached you. I have better hopes for this, from the means I have now taken of ſending you tidings of myſelf, and of hearing from you. I have ſhed many tears ſince our ſeparation; I, who never uſed to weep, but for the misfortunes of others! My aunt was much aſtoniſhed when, having, upon my arrival, inquired what accompliſhments I poſſeſſed, I told her that I could neither read nor write. She aſked

aſked me what then I had learnt ſince I came into the world; and, when I anſwered that I had been taught to take care of the houſehold affairs, and obey your will, ſhe told me, that I had received the education of a ſervant. The next day ſhe placed me as a boarder in a great abbey near Paris, where I have maſters of all kinds, who teach me, among other things, hiſtory, geography, grammar, mathematics, and riding. But I have ſo little capacity for all thoſe ſciences, that I make but ſmall progreſs with my maſters.

"My aunt's kindneſs, however, does not abate towards me. She gives me new dreſſes for each ſeaſon; and ſhe has placed two waiting-women with me, who are both dreſſed like fine ladies. She has made me take the title of counteſs; but has obliged me to renounce the name of La Tour, which is as dear to me as it is to you, from all you have told me of the ſufferings my father endured in order to marry you. She has replaced your name by that of your family, which is alſo dear to me, becauſe it was your name when a girl. Seeing myſelf in ſo ſplendid a ſituation, I implored her to let me ſend you ſome aſſiſtance. But how ſhall I repeat her anſwer? Yet

Yet you have desired me always to tell you the truth. She told me then, that a little would be of no use to you, and that a great deal would only encumber you in the simple life you led.

"I endeavoured, upon my arrival, to send you tidings of myself by another hand; but, finding no person here in whom I could place confidence, I applied night and day to reading and writing; and Heaven, who saw my motive for learning, no doubt assisted my endeavours; for I acquired both in a short time. I entrusted my first letters to some of the ladies here, who I have reason to think carried them to my aunt. This time I have had recourse to a boarder, who is my friend. I send you her direction, by means of which I shall receive your answer. My aunt has forbid my holding any correspondence whatever, which might, she says, become an obstacle to the great views she has for my advantage. No person is allowed to see me at the grate but herself, and an old nobleman, one of her friends, who, she says, is much pleased with me. I am sure I am not at all so with him; nor should I, even if it were possible for me to be pleased with any one at present.

"I live in the midſt of affluence, and have not a livre at my diſpoſal. They ſay I might make an improper uſe of money. Even my clothes belong to my waiting-women, who quarrel about them before I have left them off. In the boſom of riches, I am poorer than when I lived with you; for I have nothing to give. When I found that the great accompliſhments they taught me would not procure me the power of doing the ſmalleſt good, I had recourſe to my needle, of which happily you had learnt me the uſe. I ſend ſeveral pair of ſtockings of my own making for you and my mamma Margaret, a cap for Domingo, and one of my red handkerchiefs for Mary. I alſo ſend with this packet ſome kernels, and ſeeds of various kinds of fruit, which I gathered in the fields. There are much more beautiful flowers in the meadows of this country than in ours, but nobody cares for them. I am ſure that you and my mamma Margaret will be better pleaſed with this bag of ſeeds, than you were with the bag of piaſters, which was the cauſe of our ſeparation, and of my tears. It will give me great delight if you ſhould one day ſee apple-trees growing at the ſide of the plantain, and elms bending their foliage with our co-

coa-trees. You will fancy yourſelf in Normandy, which you love ſo much.

"You deſired me to relate to you my joys and my griefs. I have no joys far from you. As for my griefs, I endeavour to ſooth them by reflecting that I am in the ſituation in which you placed me by the will of God. But my greateſt affliction is, that no one here ſpeaks to me of you, and that I muſt ſpeak of you to no one. My waiting-women, or rather thoſe of my aunt, for they belong more to her than to me, told me the other day, when I wiſhed to turn the converſation upon the objects moſt dear to me, 'Remember, Madam, that you are a French woman, and muſt forget that country of ſavages.' Ah! ſooner will I forget myſelf, than forget the ſpot on which I was born, and which you inhabit! It is this country which is to me a land of ſavages; for I live alone, having no one to whom I can impart thoſe feelings of tenderneſs for you which I ſhall bear with me to the grave.

"I am,

"My deareſt and beloved mother,

"Your affectionate and dutiful daughter,

"VIRGINIA DE LA TOUR."

"I recommend to your goodneſs Mary and Domingo, who took ſo much care of my infancy. Careſs Fidèle for me, who found me in the wood."

Paul was aſtoniſhed that Virginia had not ſaid one word of him, ſhe, who had not forgotten even the houſe-dog. But Paul was not aware that, however long may be a woman's letter, ſhe always puts the ſentiments moſt dear to her at the end.

In a poſtſcript, Virginia recommended particularly to Paul's care two kinds of ſeed, thoſe of the violet and ſcabious. She gave him ſome inſtructions upon the nature of thoſe plants, and the ſpots moſt proper for their cultivation. "The firſt," ſaid ſhe, "produces a little flower of a deep violet, which loves to hide itſelf beneath the buſhes, but it is ſoon diſcovered by its delightful odours." She deſired thoſe ſeeds might be ſown along the borders of the fountain, at the foot of her cocoa-tree. "The ſcabious," ſhe added, "produces a beautiful flower of a pale blue, and a black ground ſpotted with white. You might fancy it was in mourning; and for this reaſon it is called the widow's flower. It delights in bleak ſpots beaten by the winds." She begged

begged this might be ſown upon the rock where ſhe had ſpoken to him for the laſt time, and that for her ſake he would henceforth give it the name of the farewell rock.

She had put thoſe ſeeds into a little purſe, the tiſſue of which was extremely ſimple; but which appeared above all price to Paul, when he perceived a P. and a V. intertwined together, and knew that the beautiful hair which formed the cypher was the hair of Virginia.

The whole family liſtened with tears to the letter of that amiable and virtuous young woman. Her mother anſwered it in the name of the little ſociety, and deſired her to remain or return as ſhe thought proper; aſſuring her, that happineſs had fled from their dwelling ſince her departure, and that as for herſelf ſhe was inconſolable.

Paul alſo ſent her a long letter, in which he aſſured her that he would arrange the garden in a manner agreeable to her taſte, and blend the plants of Europe with thoſe of Africa. He ſent her ſome fruit culled from the cocoa-trees of the fountain,

which were now arrived at maturity: telling her that he would not add any more of the other ſeeds of the iſland, that the deſire of ſeeing thoſe productions again might haſten her return. He conjured her to comply without delay with the ardent wiſhes of her family, and, above all, with his own, ſince he was unable to endure the pain of their ſeparation.

With a careful hand Paul ſowed the European ſeeds, particularly the violet and the ſcabious, the flowers of which ſeemed to bear ſome analogy to the character and ſituation of Virginia, by whom they had been recommended: but whether they were injured by the voyage, or whether the ſoil of this part of Africa is unfavourable to their growth, a very ſmall number of them blew, and none came to perfection.

Meanwhile that envy, which purſues human happineſs, ſpread reports over the iſland which gave great uneaſineſs to Paul. The perſons who had brought Virginia's letter, aſſerted that ſhe was upon the point of being married, and named the nobleman of the court with whom ſhe was going to be united. Some even declared that ſhe was already married, of which

which they were witneſſes. Paul at firſt deſpiſed this report, brought by one of thoſe trading ſhips which often ſpread erroneous intelligence in their paſſage; but ſome ill-natured perſons, by their inſulting pity, led him to give ſome degree of credit to this cruel intelligence. Beſides, he had ſeen in the novels which he had lately read, that perfidy was treated as a ſubject of pleaſantry; and knowing that thoſe books were faithful repreſentations of European manners, he feared that the heart of Virginia was corrupted, and had forgotten its former engagements. Thus his acquirements only ſerved to render him miſerable; and what increaſed his apprehenſions was, that ſeveral ſhips arrived from Europe, during the ſpace of ſix months, and not one brought any tidings of Virginia.

This unfortunate young man, with a heart torn by the moſt cruel agitation, came often to viſit me, that I might confirm or baniſh his inquietude, by my experience of the world.

I live, as I have already told you, a league and a half from hence, upon the banks of a little river

which glides along the Sloping Mountain; there I lead a ſolitary life, without wife, children, or ſlaves.

After having enjoyed and loſt the rare felicity of living with a congenial mind, the ſtate of life which appears the leaſt wretched is that of ſolitude. It is remarkable that all thoſe nations which have been rendered unhappy by their political opinions, their manners, or their forms of government, have produced numerous claſſes of citizens altogether devoted to ſolitude and celibacy. Such were the Egyptians in their decline, the Greeks of the lower empire; and ſuch in our days are the Indians, the Chineſe, the modern Greeks, the Italians, and moſt part of the eaſtern and ſouthern nations of Europe.

Thus I paſs my days far from mankind, whom I wiſhed to ſerve, and by whom I have been perſecuted. After having travelled over many countries of Europe, and ſome parts of America and Africa, I at length pitched my tent in this thinly-peopled iſland, allured by its mild temperature and its ſolitude. A cottage which I built in the woods, at the foot of a tree, a little field which I cultivated with my own hands, a river which glides before my door, ſuffice for

for my wants and for my pleaſures. I blend with thoſe enjoyments that of ſome choſen books, which teach me to become better. They make that world, which I have abandoned, ſtill contribute to my ſatisfaction. They place before me pictures of thoſe paſſions which render its inhabitants ſo miſerable; and the compariſon which I make between their deſtiny and my own, leads me to feel a ſort of negative happineſs. Like a man whom ſhipwreck has thrown upon a rock, I contemplate, from my ſolitude, the ſtorms which roll over the reſt of the world; and my repoſe ſeems more profound from the diſtant ſounds of the tempeſt.

I ſuffer myſelf to be led calmly down the ſtream of time to the ocean of futurity, which has no boundaries; while, in the contemplation of the preſent harmony of nature, I raiſe my ſoul towards its ſupreme Author, and hope for a more happy deſtiny in another ſtate of exiſtence.

Although you do not deſcry my hermitage, which is ſituated in the midſt of a foreſt, among that immenſe variety of objects which this elevated ſpot preſents, the grounds are diſpoſed with particular beauty, at leaſt

to

to one who, like me, loves rather the ſecluſion of a home-ſcene, than great and extenſive proſpects. The river which glides before my door paſſes in a ſtraight line acroſs the woods, and appears like a long canal ſhaded by trees of all kinds. There are black date plum-trees, what we here call the narrow-leaved dodonea, olive-wood, gum-trees, and the cinnamon-tree; while in ſome parts the cabbage-trees raiſe their naked columns more than an hundred feet high, crowned at their ſummits with cluſtering leaves, and towering above the wood like one foreſt piled upon another. Lianas, of various foliage, intertwining among the woods, form arcades of flowers, and verdant canopies: thoſe trees for the moſt part ſhed aromatic odours of a nature ſo powerful, that the garments of a traveller, who has paſſed through the foreſt, retain for ſeveral hours the delicious fragrance. In the ſeaſon when thoſe trees produce their laviſh bloſſoms, they appear as if covered with ſnow. One of the principal ornaments of our woods is the calbaſſia, a tree not only diſtinguiſhed for its beautiful tint of verdure, but for other properties, which Madame de la Tour has deſcribed in the following ſonnet, written at one of her firſt viſits to my hermitage.

SONNET

SONNET

TO THE CALBASSIA-TREE.

SUBLIME Calbaſſia! luxuriant tree!
How ſoft the gloom thy bright-hu'd foliage throws,
While from thy pulp a healing balſam flows,
Whoſe power the ſuff'ring wretch from pain can free!
My penſive footſteps ever turn to thee!
Since oft, while muſing on my laſting woes,
Beneath thy flow'ry white-bells I repoſe,
Symbol of friendſhip doſt thou ſeem to me;
For thus has friendſhip caſt her ſoothing ſhade
O'er my unſhelter'd boſom's keen diſtreſs;
Thus ſought to heal the wounds which love has made,
And temper bleeding ſorrow's ſharp exceſs!
Ah! not in vain ſhe lends her balmy aid:
The agonies ſhe cannot cure, are leſs!

Towards the end of ſummer various kinds of foreign birds haſten, impelled by an inexplicable inſtinct, from unknown regions, and acroſs immenſe oceans, to gather the profuſe grains of this iſland; and the brilliancy of their expanded plumage forms a contraſt to the trees embrowned by the ſun. Such, among others, are various kinds of peroquets, the blue pigeon, called here the pigeon of Holland, and the wandering and majeſtic white bird of the Tropic, which Madame de la Tour thus apoſtrophized.

SONNET

TO THE WHITE BIRD OF THE TROPIC.

Bird of the Tropic! thou, who lov'ſt to ſtray,
Where they long pinions ſweep the ſultry line,
Or mark'ſt the bounds which torrid beams confine
By thy averted courſe, that ſhuns the ray
Oblique, enamour'd of ſublimer day:
Oft on yon cliff thy folded plumes recline,
And drop thoſe ſnowy feathers Indians twine
To crown the warrior's brow with honours gay.
O'er trackleſs oceans what impels thy wing?
Does no ſoft inſtinct in thy ſoul prevail?
No ſweet affection to thy boſom cling,
And bid thee oft thy abſent neſt bewail?
Yet thou again to that dear ſpot canſt ſpring:
But I my long-loſt home no more ſhall hail!

The domeſtic inhabitants of our foreſts, monkies, ſport upon the dark branches of the trees, from which they are diſtinguiſhed by their grey and greeniſh ſkin, and their black viſages. Some hang ſuſpended by the tail, and balance themſelves in air; others leap from branch to branch, bearing their young in their arms. The murderous gun has never affrighted thoſe peaceful children of nature. You ſometimes hear the warblings of unknown birds from the ſouthern countries, repeated at a diſtance by the echoes of the foreſt. The river, which runs in foaming cataracts over a bed of rocks, reflects here and there, upon its limpid waters, venerable maſſes of woody ſhade, together with the ſport of its happy inhabitants. About a thouſand paces from thence the river precipitates itſelf over ſeveral piles of rocks, and forms in its fall a ſheet of water ſmooth as cryſtal, but which breaks at the bottom into frothy ſurges. Innumerable confuſed ſounds iſſue from thoſe tumultuous waters, which, ſcattered by the winds of the foreſt, ſometimes ſink, ſometimes ſwell, and ſend forth a hollow tone like the deep bells of a cathedral. The air, for ever renewed by the circulation of the waters, fans the banks of that river with freſhneſs, and leaves a degree of verdure, notwithſtanding the

ſummer

ſummer heats, rarely found in this iſland, even upon the ſummits of the mountains.

At ſome diſtance is a rock placed far enough from the caſcade to prevent the ear from being deafened by the noiſe of its waters, and ſufficiently near for the enjoyment of their view, their coolneſs, and their murmurs. Thither, amidſt the heats of ſummer, Madame de la Tour, Margaret, Virginia, Paul, and myſelf, ſometimes repaired, and dined beneath the ſhadow of the rock. Virginia, who always directed her moſt ordinary actions to the good of others, never eat of any fruit without planting the ſeed or kernel in the ground. "From this," ſaid ſhe, "trees will come, which will give their fruit to ſome traveller, or at leaſt to ſome bird." One day, having eaten of the papaw-fruit, at the foot of that rock ſhe planted the ſeeds. Soon after ſeveral papaws ſprung up, amongſt which was one which yielded fruit. This tree had riſen but a little from the ground at the time of Virginia's departure; but, its growth being rapid, in the ſpace of two years it had gained twenty feet of height, and the upper part of its ſtem was encircled with ſeveral layers of ripe fruit. Paul, having wandered to that ſpot, was delighted to ſee that this lofty

lofty tree had ariſen from the ſmall ſeed planted by his beloved friend; but that emotion inſtantly gave place to deep melancholy, at this evidence of her long abſence. The objects which we ſee habitually, do not remind us of the rapidity of life; they decline inſenſibly with ourſelves; but thoſe which we behold again, after having for ſome years loſt ſight of them, impreſs us powerfully with the idea of that ſwiftneſs with which the tide of our days flows on. Paul was no leſs overwhelmed and affected at the ſight of this great papaw-tree, loaded with fruit, than is the traveller when, after a long abſence from his own country, he finds not his contemporaries, but their children, whom he left at the breaſt, and whom he ſees are become fathers of families. Paul ſometimes thought of hewing down the tree, which recalled too ſenſibly the diſtracted image of that length of time which had elapſed ſince the departure of Virginia. Sometimes, contemplating it as a monument of her benevolence, he kiſſed its trunk, and apoſtrophized it in terms of the moſt paſſionate regret; and, indeed, I have myſelf gazed upon it with more emotion, and more veneration, than upon the triumphal arches of Rome.

At

At the foot of this papaw I was always ſure to meet with Paul when he came into our neighbourhood. One day, when I found him abſorbed in melancholy, we had a converſation, which I will relate to you, if I do not weary you by my long digreſſions; perhaps pardonable to my age and my laſt friendſhips.

Paul ſaid to me, "I am very unhappy. Mademoiſelle de la Tour has now been gone two years and two months; and we have heard no tidings of her for eight months and two weeks. She is rich, and I am poor. She has forgotten me. I have a great mind to follow her. I will go to France; I will ſerve the king; make a fortune; and then Mademoiſelle de la Tour's aunt will beſtow her niece upon me when I ſhall have become a great lord."

"But, my dear friend," I anſwered, "have you not told me that you are not of noble birth?"

"My mother has told me ſo," ſaid Paul. "As for myſelf, I know not what noble birth means."

"Obſcure birth," I replied, "in France, ſhuts out all acceſs to great employments; nor can you

even be received among any diſtinguiſhed body of men."

"How unfortunate I am!" reſumed Paul: "Every thing repulſes me. I am condemned to waſte my wretched life in labour, far from Virginia." And he heaved a deep ſigh.

"Since her relation," he added, "will only give her in marriage to ſome one with a great name, by the aid of ſtudy we become wiſe and celebrated. I will fly then to ſtudy; I will acquire ſciences; I will ſerve my country uſefully by my attainments: I ſhall be independent; I ſhall become renowned; and my glory will belong only to myſelf."

"My ſon! talents are ſtill more rare than birth or riches, and are undoubtedly an ineſtimable good, of which nothing can deprive us, and which every where conciliate public eſteem. But they coſt dear; they are generally allied to exquiſite ſenſibility, which renders their poſſeſſor miſerable. But you tell me that you would ſerve mankind. He who, from the ſoil which he cultivates, draws forth one

additional ſheaf of corn, ſerves mankind more than he who preſents them with a book."

"Oh! ſhe then," exclaimed Paul, "who planted this papaw-tree, made a preſent to the inhabitants of the foreſt more dear and more uſeful than if ſhe had given them a library." And, ſeizing the tree in his arms, he kiſſed it with tranſport.

"Ah! I deſire glory only," he reſumed, "to confer it upon Virginia, and render her dear to the whole univerſe. But you, who know ſo much, tell me if we ſhall ever be married. I wiſh I was at leaſt learned enough to look into futurity. Virginia muſt come back. What need has ſhe of a rich relation? She was ſo happy in thoſe huts, ſo beautiful, and ſo well-dreſſed, with a red handkerchief or flowers round her head! Return, Virginia! Leave your palaces, your ſplendor! Return to theſe rocks, to the ſhade of our woods and our cocoa-trees! Alas! you are, perhaps, unhappy!" And he began to weep. "My father! conceal nothing from me. If you cannot tell me whether I ſhall marry Virginia or no, tell me, at leaſt, if ſhe ſtill loves me amidſt thoſe great lords who ſpeak to the king, and go to ſee her."

"Oh! my dear friend," I anſwered, "I am ſure that ſhe loves you for ſeveral reaſons; but, above all, becauſe ſhe is virtuous." At thoſe words he threw himſelf upon my neck in a tranſport of joy.

"But what," ſaid he, "do you underſtand by virtue?"

"My ſon! to you, who ſupport your family by your labour, it need not be defined. Virtue is an effort which we make for the good of others, and with the intention of pleaſing God."

"Oh! how virtuous then," cried he, "is Virginia! Virtue made her ſeek for riches, that ſhe might practiſe benevolence. Virtue led her to forſake this iſland, and virtue will bring her back." The idea of her near return fired his imagination, and his inquietudes ſuddenly vaniſhed. Virginia, he was perſuaded, had not written, becauſe ſhe would ſoon arrive. It took ſo little time to come from Europe with a fair wind! Then he enumerated the veſſels which had made a paſſage of four thouſand five hundred leagues in leſs than three months; and perhaps the veſſel in which Virginia had embarked might

might not be longer than two. Ship-builders were now ſo ingenious, and ſailors ſo expert! He then told me of the arrangements he would make for her reception, of the new habitation he would build for her, of the pleaſures and ſurpriſes which each day ſhould bring along with it when ſhe was his wife. His wife! That hope was ecſtaſy. "At leaſt, my dear father," ſaid he, "you ſhall then do nothing more than you pleaſe. Virginia being rich, we ſhall have a number of negroes, who will labour for you. You ſhall always live with us, and have no other care than to amuſe and rejoice yourſelf:" And, his heart throbbing with delight, he flew to communicate thoſe exquiſite ſenſations to his family.

In a ſhort time, however, the moſt cruel apprehenſions ſucceeded thoſe enchanting hopes. Violent paſſions ever throw the ſoul into oppoſite extremes. Paul returned to my dwelling abſorbed in melancholy, and ſaid to me, "I hear nothing from Virginia. Had ſhe left Europe, ſhe would have informed me of her departure. Ah! the reports which I have heard concerning her are but too well founded. Her aunt has married her to ſome great lord. She, like others, has been undone by the

love of riches. In thoſe books which paint women ſo well, virtue is but a ſubject of romance. Had Virginia been virtuous, ſhe would not have forſaken her mother and me, and, while I paſs life in thinking of her, forget me. While I am wretched, ſhe is happy. Ah! that thought diſtracts me: labour becomes painful, and ſociety irkſome. Would to heaven that war were declared in India, I would go there and die."

"My ſon," I anſwered, "that courage which prompts us to court death, is but the courage of a moment, and is often excited by the vain hopes of poſthumous fame. There is a ſpecies of courage more neceſſary, and more rare, which makes us ſupport, without witneſs, and without applauſe, the various vexations of life; and that is patience. Leaning not upon the opinions of others, but upon the will of God, patience is the courage of virtue.

"Ah!" cried he, "I am then without virtue! Every thing overwhelms and diſtracts me."

"Equal, conſtant, and invariable virtue," I replied, "belongs not to man. In the midſt of ſo many

many paſſions, by which we are agitated, our reaſon is diſordered and obſcured: but there is an ever-burning lamp, at which we can re-kindle its flame, and that is literature.

"Literature," my dear ſon, "is the gift of Heaven; a ray of that wiſdom which governs the univerſe; and which man, inſpired by celeſtial intelligence, has drawn down to earth. Like the ſun, it enlightens, it rejoices, it warms with a divine flame, and ſeems, in ſome ſort, like the element of fire, to bend all nature to our uſe. By the aid of literature, we bring around us all things, all places, men, and times. By its aid we calm the paſſions, ſuppreſs vice, and excite virtue. Literature is the daughter of heaven, who has deſcended upon earth to ſoften and to charm all human evils.

"Have recourſe to your books then, my ſon. The ſages who have written before our days, are travellers who have preceded us in the paths of misfortune; who ſtretched out a friendly hand towards us, and invite us to join their ſociety, when every thing elſe abandons us. A good book is a good friend."

"Ah!" cried Paul, "I ſtood in no need of books when Virginia was here, and ſhe had ſtudied as little as me: but when ſhe looked at me, and called me her friend, it was impoſſible for me to be unhappy."

"Undoubtedly," ſaid I, "there is no friend ſo agreeable as a miſtreſs by whom we are beloved. There is in the gay graces of woman, a charm that diſpels the dark phantoms of reflection. Upon her face ſits ſoft attraction, and tender confidence. What joy is not heightened in which ſhe ſhares? What brow is not unbent by her ſmiles? What anger can reſiſt her tears? Virginia will return with more philoſophy than you, and will be ſurpriſed not to find the garden finiſhed; ſhe who thought of its embelliſhments amidſt the perſecutions of her aunt, and far from her mother and from you."

The idea of Virginia's ſpeedy return re-animated her lover's courage, and he reſumed his paſtoral occupations; happy amidſt his toils, in the reflection that they would find a termination ſo dear to the wiſhes of his heart.

The 24th of December, 1774, at break of day, Paul, when he aroſe, perceived a white flag hoiſted upon the Mountain of Diſcovery, which was the ſignal of a veſſel deſcried at ſea. He flew to the town, in order to learn if this veſſel brought any tidings of Virginia, and waited till the return of the pilot, who had gone as uſual to viſit the ſhip. The pilot brought the governor information that the veſſel was the Saint-Geran, of ſeven hundred tons, commanded by a captain of the name of Aubin; that the ſhip was now four leagues out at ſea, and would anchor at Port Louis the following afternoon, if the wind were favourable: at preſent there was a calm. The pilot then remitted to the governor a number of letters from France, amongſt which was one addreſſed to Madame de la Tour, in the hand-writing of Virginia. Paul ſeized upon the letter, kiſſed it with tranſport, placed it in his boſom, and flew to the plantation. No ſooner did he perceive from a diſtance the family, who were waiting his return upon the *Farewell Rock*, than he waved the letter in the air, without having the power to ſpeak; and inſtantly the whole family crowded round Madame de la Tour to hear it read. Virginia informed her mother that ſhe had ſuffered much ill-treatment from

from her aunt, who, after having in vain urged her to marry againſt her inclination, had diſinherited her; and at length ſent her back at ſuch a ſeaſon of the year, that ſhe muſt probably reach the Mauritius at the very period of the hurricanes. In vain, ſhe added, ſhe had endeavoured to ſoften her aunt, by repreſenting what ſhe owed to her mother, and to the habits of her early years: ſhe had been treated as a romantic girl, whoſe head was turned by novels. At preſent ſhe ſaid ſhe could think of nothing but the tranſport of again ſeeing and embracing her beloved family; and that ſhe would have ſatisfied this deareſt wiſh of her heart that very day, if the captain would have permitted her to embark in the pilot's boat; but that he had oppoſed her going, on account of the diſtance from the ſhore, and of a ſwell in the ocean, notwithſtanding it was a calm.

Scarcely was the letter finiſhed, when the whole family, tranſported with joy, repeated, "Virginia is arrived!" and miſtreſſes and ſervants embraced each other. Madame de la Tour ſaid to Paul, "My ſon, go and inform our neighbour of Virginia's arrival." Domingo immediately lighted a torch; and he and Paul bent their way towards my plantation.

It

It was about ten at night, and I was going to extinguiſh my lamp, when I perceived through the paliſades of my hut a light in the woods. I aroſe, and had juſt dreſſed myſelf, when Paul, half wild, and panting for breath, ſprung on my neck, crying, "Come along, come along. Virginia is arrived! Let us go the Port: The veſſel will anchor at break of day."

We inſtantly ſet off. As we were traverſing the woods of the Sloping Mountain, and were already on the road which leads from the Shaddock Grove to the Port, I heard ſome one walking behind us. When the perſon, who was a negro, and who advanced with haſty ſteps, had reached us, I enquired from whence he came, and whither he was a-going with ſuch expedition. He anſwered, "I come from that part of the iſland called Golden Duſt; and am ſent to the Port, to inform the governor, that a ſhip from France has anchored upon the Iſland of Amber, and fires guns of diſtreſs, for the ſea is very ſtormy." Having ſaid this, the man left us, and purſued his journey,

"Let

"Let us go," ſaid I to Paul, "towards that part of the iſland, and meet Virginia. It is only three leagues from hence." Accordingly we bent our courſe thither. The heat was ſuffocating. The moon had riſen, and was encompaſſed by three large black circles. A diſmal darkneſs ſhrouded the ſky; but the frequent flakes of lightning diſcovered long chains of thick clouds, gloomy, low-hung, and heaped together over the middle of the iſland, after having rolled with great rapidity from the ocean, although we felt not a breath of wind upon the land. As we walked along, we thought we heard peals of thunder; but, after liſtening more attentively, we found they were the ſound of diſtant cannon repeated by the echoes. Thoſe ſounds, joined to the tempeſtuous aſpect of the heavens, made me ſhudder. I had little doubt that they were ſignals of diſtreſs from a ſhip in danger. In half an hour the firing ceaſed, and I felt the ſilence more appalling than the diſmal ſounds which had preceded.

We haſtened on without uttering a word, or daring to communicate our apprehenſions. At midnight we arrived on the ſea-ſhore at that part of the iſland. The billows broke againſt the beach with a horrrible noiſe,

noiſe, covering the rocks and the ſtrand with their foam of a dazzling whiteneſs, and blended with ſparks of fire. By their phoſphoric gleams we diſtinguiſhed, notwithſtanding the darkneſs, the canoes of the fiſhermen, which they had drawn far upon the ſand.

Near the ſhore, at the entrance of a wood, we ſaw a fire, round which ſeveral of the inhabitants were aſſembled. Thither we repaired, in order to repoſe ourſelves till morning. One of the circle related, that in the afternoon he had ſeen a veſſel driven towards the iſland by the currents; that the night had hid it from his view; and that two hours after ſun-ſet he had heard the firing of guns in diſtreſs; but that the ſea was ſo tempeſtuous, no boat could venture out: that a ſhort time after, he thought he perceived the glimmering of the watch-lights on board the veſſel, which he feared, by its having approached ſo near the coaſt, had ſteered between the main land and the little Iſland of Amber, miſtaking it for the Point of Endeavour, near which the veſſels paſs in order to gain Port Louis. If this was the caſe, which however he could not affirm, the ſhip he apprehended was in great danger. Another

ther iſlander then informed us, that he had frequently croſſed the channel which ſeparates the Iſle of Amber from the coaſt, and which he had ſounded; that the anchorage was good, and that the ſhip would there be in as great ſecurity as if it were in harbour. A third iſlander declared it was impoſſible for the ſhip to enter that channel, which was ſcarcely navigable for a boat. He aſſerted, that he had ſeen the veſſel at anchor beyond the Iſle of Amber; ſo that if the wind aroſe in the morning, it could either put to ſea, or gain the harbour. Different opinions were ſtated upon this ſubject, which while thoſe indolent creoles calmly diſcuſſed, Paul and I obſerved a profound ſilence. We remained on this ſpot till break of day, when the weather was too hazy to admit of our diſtinguiſhing any object at ſea, which was covered with fog. All we could deſcry was a dark cloud, which they told us was the Iſle of Amber, at the diſtance of a quarter of a league from the coaſt. We could only diſcern on this gloomy day the point of the beach where we ſtood, and the peaks of ſome mountains in the interior part of the iſland, riſing occaſionally from amidſt the clouds which hung around them.

At

At ſeven in the morning we heard the beat of drums in the woods; and ſoon after the governor, Monſieur de la Bourdonnais, arrived on horſeback, followed by a detachment of ſoldiers armed with muſkets, and a great number of iſlanders and blacks. He ranged his ſoldiers upon the beach, and ordered them to make a general diſcharge, which was no ſooner done, than we perceived a glimmering light upon the water, which was inſtantly ſucceeded by the ſound of a gun. We judged that the ſhip was at no great diſtance, and ran towards that part where we had ſeen the light. We now diſcerned through the fog the hulk and tackling of a large veſſel; and, notwithſtanding the noiſe of the waves, we were near enough to hear the whiſtle of the boatſwain at the helm, and the ſhouts of the mariners. As ſoon as the Saint-Geran perceived that we were near enough to give her ſuccour, ſhe continued to fire guns regularly at the interval of three minutes. Monſieur de la Bourdonnais cauſed great fires to be lighted at certain diſtances upon the ſtrand, and ſent to all the inhabitants of that neighbourhood, in ſearch of proviſions, planks, cables, and empty barrels. A crowd of people ſoon arrived, accompanied by their negroes, loaded with proviſions and rigging. One of the moſt

moſt aged of the planters approaching the governor, ſaid to him, "We have heard all night hoarſe noiſes in the mountain, and in the foreſts: the leaves of the trees are ſhaken, although there is no wind; the ſea-birds ſeek refuge upon the land: It is certain that all thoſe ſigns announce a hurricane." "Well, my friends," anſwered the governor, "we are prepared for it; and no doubt the veſſel is alſo."

Every thing, indeed, preſaged the near approach of the hurricane. The centre of the clouds in the zenith was of a diſmal black, while their ſkirts were fringed with a copper hue. The air reſounded with the cries of the frigate-bird, the cur-water, and a multitude of other ſea-birds, who, notwithſtanding the obſcurity of the atmoſphere, haſtened from all points of the horizon to ſeek for ſhelter in the iſland.

Towards nine in the morning we heard on the ſide of the ocean the moſt terrific noiſe, as if torrents of water, mingled with thunder, were rolling down the ſteeps of the mountains. A general cry was heard of "There is the hurricane!" and in one moment a frightful whirlwind ſcattered the fog which had covered the Iſle of Amber and its channel. The Saint-

Geran

Geran then preſented itſelf to our view, her gallery crowded with people, her yards and main-top-maſt laid upon the deck, her flag ſhivered, with four cables at her head, and one by which ſhe was held at the ſtern. She had anchored between the Iſle of Amber and the main land, within that chain of breakers which encircles the iſland, and which bar ſhe had paſſed over in a place where no veſſel had ever gone before. She preſented her head to the waves, which rolled from the open ſea; and as each billow ruſhed into the ſtraits, the ſhip heaved, ſo that her keel was in air; and at the ſame moment her ſtern, plunging into the water, diſappeared altogether, as if it were ſwallowed up by the ſurges. In this poſition, driven by the winds and waves towards the ſhore, it was equally impoſſible for her to return by the paſſage through which ſhe had made her way; or, by cutting her cables, to throw herſelf upon the beach, from which ſhe was ſeparated by ſand banks mingled with breakers. Every billow which broke upon the coaſt advanced roaring to the bottom of the bay, and threw planks to the diſtance of fifty feet upon the land; then ruſhing back, laid bare its ſandy bed; from which it rolled immenſe ſtones with a hoarſe diſmal noiſe. The ſea, ſwelled by the violence of the wind, roſe higher every moment; and

the channel between this iſland and the Iſle of Amber was but one vaſt ſheet of white foam, with yawning pits of black deep billows. The foam boiling in the gulph was more than ſix feet high; and the winds which ſwept its ſurface bore it over the ſteep coaſt more than half a league upon the land. Thoſe innumerable white flakes, driven horizontally as far as the foot of the mountain, appeared like ſnow iſſuing from the ocean, which was now confounded with the ſky. Thick clouds of a horrible form ſwept along the zenith with the ſwiftneſs of birds, while others appeared motionleſs as rocks. No ſpot of azure could be diſcerned in the firmament; only a pale yellow gleam diſplayed the objects of earth, ſea, and ſkies.

From the violent efforts of the ſhip, what we dreaded happened. The cables at the head of the veſſel were torn away; it was then held by one anchor only, and was inſtantly daſhed upon the rocks at the diſtance of half a cable's length from the ſhore. A general cry of horror iſſued from the ſpectators. Paul ruſhed towards the ſea, when, ſeizing him by the arm, I exclaimed, "Would you periſh?" "Let me go to ſave her," cried he, "or die!" Seeing that deſpair had deprived him of reaſon, Domingo and I, in order to preſerve him, faſtened

a long cord round his waiſt, and ſeized hold of each end. Paul then precipitated himſelf towards the ſhip, now ſwimming, and now walking upon the breakers. Sometimes he had the hope of reaching the veſſel, which the ſea in its irregular movements had left almoſt dry, ſo that you could have made its circuit on foot; but ſuddenly the waves, advancing with new fury, ſhrouded it beneath mountains of water, which then lifted it upright upon its keel. The billows at the ſame moment threw the unfortunate Paul far upon the beach, his legs bathed in blood, his boſom wounded, and himſelf half dead. The moment he had recovered his ſenſes, he aroſe, and returned with new ardour towards the veſſel, the parts of which now yawned aſunder from the violent ſtrokes of the billows. The crew then, deſpairing of their ſafety, threw themſelves in crowds into the ſea, upon yards, planks, hen-coops, tables, and barrels. At this moment we beheld an object fitted to excite eternal ſympathy; a young lady, in the gallery of the ſtern of the Saint-Geran, ſtretching out her arms towards him who made ſo many efforts to join her. It was Virginia. She had diſcovered her lover by his intrepidity. The ſight of this amiable young woman, expoſed to ſuch horrible danger, filled us with unutterable deſpair. As for Virginia, with a firm and

dignified mien, ſhe waved her hand, as if bidding us an eternal farewell. All the ſailors had flung themſelves into the ſea, except one, who ſtill remained upon the deck, and who was naked, and ſtrong as Hercules. This man approached Virginia with reſpect, and kneeling at her feet, attempted to force her to throw off her clothes; but ſhe repulſed him with modeſty, and turned away her head. Then was heard redoubled cries from the ſpectators, "Save her! Save her! Do not leave her!" But at that moment a mountain billow, of enormous magnitude, ingulphed itſelf between the Iſle of Amber and the coaſt, and menaced the ſhattered veſſel, towards which it rolled bellowing, with its black ſides and foaming head. At this terrible ſight the ſailor flung himſelf into the ſea; and Virginia, ſeeing death inevitable, placed one hand upon her clothes, the other on her heart, and lifting up her lovely eyes, ſeemed an angel prepared to take her flight to heaven.

Oh, day of horror! Alas! every thing was ſwallowed up by the relentleſs billows. The ſurge threw ſome of the ſpectators far upon the beach, whom an impulſe of humanity prompted to advance towards Virginia, and alſo the ſailor who had endeavoured to ſave her life. This man, who had eſcaped from almoſt certain death, kneeling on the ſand, exclaimed,

"Oh,

"Oh, my God! thou haſt ſaved my life; but I would have given it willingly for that poor young woman!"

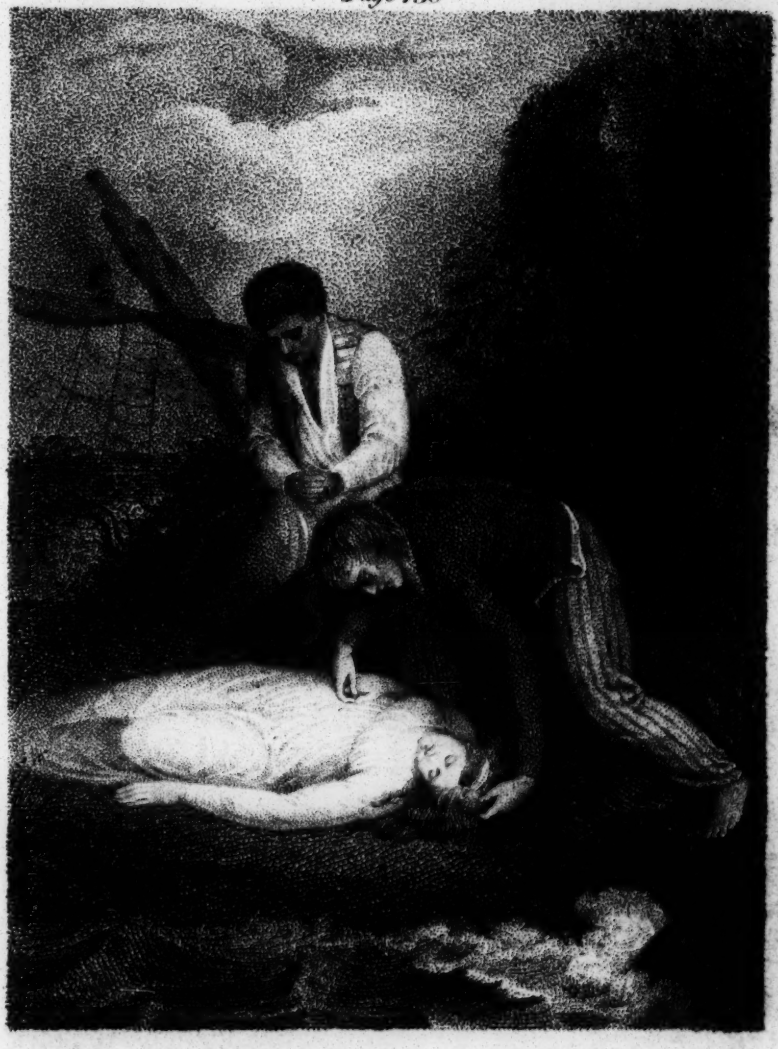
Domingo and myſelf drew Paul ſenſeleſs to the ſhore, the blood flowing from his mouth and ears. The governor put him into the hands of a ſurgeon, while we ſought along the beach for the corpſe of Virginia. But the wind having ſuddenly changed, which frequently happens during hurricanes, our ſearch was vain; and we lamented that we could not even pay this unfortunate young woman the laſt ſad ſepulchral duties.

We retired from the ſpot overwhelmed with diſmay, and our minds wholly occupied by one cruel loſs, although numbers had periſhed in the wreck. Some of the ſpectators ſeemed tempted, from the fatal deſtiny of this virtuous young woman, to doubt the exiſtence of Providence. Alas! there are in life ſuch terrible, ſuch unmerited evils, that even the hope of the wiſe is ſometimes ſhaken.

In the mean time Paul, who began to recover his ſenſes, was taken to a houſe in the neighbourhood, till he was able to be removed to his own habitation. Thither I bent my way with Domingo, and undertook the ſad taſk of preparing Virginia's mother and her friend for the melancholy event which had hap-

pened. When we reached the entrance of the valley of the river of Fan-Palms, ſome negroes informed us that the ſea had thrown many pieces of the wreck into the oppoſite bay. We deſcended towards it; and one of the firſt objects which ſtruck my ſight upon the beach was the corpſe of Virginia. The body was half covered with ſand, and in the attitude in which we had ſeen her periſh. Her features were not changed; her eyes were cloſed, her countenance was ſtill ſerene; but the pale violets of death were blended on her cheek with the bluſh of virgin modeſty. One of her hands was placed upon her clothes; and the other, which ſhe held on her heart, was faſt cloſed, and ſo ſtiffened, that it was with difficulty I took from its graſp a ſmall box. How great was my emotion, when I ſaw it contained the picture of Paul, which ſhe had promiſed him never to part with while ſhe lived! At the ſight of this laſt mark of the fidelity and tenderneſs of the unfortunate girl, I wept bitterly. As for Domingo, he beat his breaſt, and pierced the air with his cries. We carried the body of Virginia to a fiſher's hut, and gave it in charge of ſome poor Malabar women, who carefully waſhed away the ſand.

While they were employed in this melancholy office, we aſcended with trembling ſteps to the plantation.



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tation. We found Madame de la Tour and Margaret at prayer, while waiting for tidings from the ſhip. As ſoon as Madame de la Tour ſaw me coming, ſhe eagerly cried, "Where is my child, my dear child?" My ſilence and my tears apprized her of her misfortune. She was ſeized with convulſive ſtiflings, with agonizing pains, and her voice was only heard in groans. Margaret cried, "Where is my ſon? I do not ſee my ſon!" and fainted. We ran to her aſſiſtance. In a ſhort time ſhe recovered; and being aſſured that her ſon was ſafe, and under the care of the governor, ſhe only thought of ſuccouring her friend, who had long ſucceſſive faintings. Madame de la Tour paſſed the night in ſufferings ſo exquiſite, that I became convinced there was no ſorrow like a mother's ſorrow. When ſhe recovered her ſenſes, ſhe caſt her languid and ſtedfaſt looks on heaven. In vain her friend and myſelf preſſed her hands in ours; in vain we called upon her by the moſt tender names; ſhe appeared wholly inſenſible; and her oppreſſed boſom heaved deep and hollow moans.

In the morning Paul was brought home in a palanquin. He was now reſtored to reaſon, but unable to utter a word. His interview with his mother and Madame de la Tour, which I had dreaded, pro-

duced a better effect than all my cares. A ray of conſolation gleamed upon the countenances of thoſe unfortunate mothers. They flew to meet him, claſped him in their arms, and bathed him with tears, which exceſs of anguiſh had till now forbidden to flow. Paul mixed his tears with theirs; and nature having thus found relief, a long ſtupor ſucceeded the convulſive pangs they had ſuffered, and gave them a lethargic repoſe like that of death.

Monſieur de la Bourdonnais ſent to apprize me ſecretly that the corpſe of Virginia had been borne to the town by his order, from whence it was to be transferred to the church of the Shaddock Grove. I haſtened to Port Louis, and found a multitude aſſembled from all parts, in order to be preſent at the funeral ſolemnity, as if the whole iſland had loſt its faireſt ornament. The veſſels in the harbour had their yards croſſed, their flags hoiſted, and fired guns at intervals. The grenadiers led the funeral proceſſion, with their muſquets reverſed, their drums muffled, and ſending forth ſlow diſmal ſounds. Eight young ladies of the moſt conſiderable families of the iſland, dreſſed in white, and bearing palms in their hands, ſupported the pall of their amiable companion, which was ſtrewed with flowers. They were followed by a band of children chanting hymns, and

by

by the governor, his field officers, all the principal inhabitants of the iſland, and an immenſe crowd of people.

This funeral ſolemnity had been ordered by the adminiſtration of the country, who were deſirous of rendering honours to the virtue of Virginia. But when the proceſſion arrived at the foot of this mountain, at the ſight of thoſe cottages, of which ſhe had ſo long been the ornament and happineſs, and which her loſs now filled with deſpair, the funeral pomp was interrupted, the hymns and anthems ceaſed, and the plain reſounded with ſighs and lamentations. Companies of young girls ran from the neighbouring plantations to touch the coffin of Virginia with their ſcarfs, chaplets, and crowns of flowers, invoking her as a ſaint. Mothers aſked of Heaven a child like Virginia; lovers, a heart as faithful; the poor, as tender a friend; and the ſlaves, as kind a miſtreſs.

When the proceſſion had reached the place of interment, the negreſſes of Madagaſcar, and the caffres of Moſambiac, placed baſkets of fruit around the corpſe, and hung pieces of ſtuff upon the neighbouring trees, according to the cuſtom of their country. The Indians of Bengal, and of the coaſt of Malabar, brought cages filled with birds, which they ſet at liberty upon her coffin. Thus did the

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loſs of this amiable object affect the natives of different countries, and thus was the ritual of various religions breathed over the tomb of unfortunate virtue.

She was interred near the church of the Shaddock Grove, upon the weſtern ſide, at the foot of a copſe of bamboos, where, in coming from maſs with her mother and Margaret, ſhe loved to repoſe herſelf, ſeated by him whom ſhe called her brother.

On his return from the funeral ſolemnity, Monſieur de la Bourdonnais came hither, followed by part of his numerous train. He offered Madame de la Tour and her friend all the aſſiſtance which it was in his power to beſtow. After expreſſing his indignation at the conduct of her unnatural aunt, he advanced to Paul, and ſaid every thing which he thought moſt likely to ſooth and conſole him. "Heaven is my witneſs," ſaid he, "that I wiſhed to enſure your happineſs, and that of your family. My dear friend, you muſt go to France: I will obtain a commiſſion for you, and during your abſence will take the ſame care of your mother as if ſhe were my own." He then offered him his hand; but Paul drew away, and turned his head, unable to bear his ſight.

I remained at the plantation of my unfortunate friends, that I might render to them and Paul thoſe offices

offices of friendſhip which ſoften, though they cannot cure, calamity. At the end of three weeks Paul was able to walk, yet his mind ſeemed to droop in proportion as his frame gathered ſtrength. He was inſenſible to every thing; his look was vacant; and when ſpoken to, he made no reply. Madame de la Tour, who was dying, ſaid to him often, "My ſon, while I look at you I think I ſee Virginia." At the name of Virginia he ſhuddered, and haſtened from her, notwithſtanding the intreaties of his mother, who called him back to her friend. He uſed to wander into the garden, and ſeat himſelf at the foot of Virginia's cocoa-tree, with his eyes fixed upon the fountain. The ſurgeon to the governor, who had ſhewn the moſt humane attention to Paul, and the whole family, told us that, in order to cure that deep melancholy which had taken poſſeſſion of his mind, we muſt allow him to do whatever he pleaſed, without contradiction, as the only means of conquering his inflexible ſilence.

I reſolved to follow this advice. The firſt uſe which Paul made of his returning ſtrength was to abſent himſelf from the plantation. Being determined not to loſe ſight of him, I ſet out immediately, and deſired Domingo to take ſome proviſions and accompany us. Paul's ſtrength and ſpirits ſeemed renewed

renewed as he deſcended the mountain. He took the road of the Shaddock Grove; and when he was near the church in the Alley of Bamboos, he walked directly to the ſpot where he ſaw ſome new-laid earth, and there kneeling down, and raiſing his eyes to heaven, he offered up a long prayer, which appeared to me a ſymptom of returning reaſon; ſince this mark of confidence in the Supreme Being ſhewed that his mind began to reſume its natural functions. Domingo and I followed his example, fell upon our knees, and mingled our prayers with his. When he aroſe, he bent his way, paying little attention to us, towards the northern part of the iſland. As we knew that he was not only ignorant of the ſpot where the body of Virginia was laid, but even whether it had been ſnatched from the waves, I aſked him why he had offered up his prayer at the foot of thoſe bamboos. He anſwered, "We have been there ſo often!" He continued his courſe until we reached the borders of the foreſt, when night came on. I prevailed with him to take ſome nouriſhment; and we ſlept upon the graſs at the foot of a tree. The next day I thought he ſeemed diſpoſed to trace back his ſteps; for, after having gazed a conſiderable time upon the church of the Shaddock Grove, with its avenues of bamboo ſtretching

ing along the plain, he made a motion as if he would return; but, ſuddenly plunging into the foreſt, he directed his courſe to the north. I judged what was his deſign, from which I endeavoured to diſſuade him in vain. At noon we arrived at that part of the iſland called the Gold-Duſt. He ruſhed to the ſea-ſhore, oppoſite to the ſpot where the Saint-Geran periſhed. At the ſight of the Iſle of Amber, and its channel, then ſmooth as a mirror, he cried, "Virginia! Oh, my dear Virginia!" and fell ſenſeleſs. Domingo and myſelf carried him into the woods, where we recovered him with ſome difficulty. He made an effort to return to the ſea-ſhore; but, having conjured him not to renew his own anguiſh and ours by thoſe cruel remembrances, he took another direction. During eight days, he ſought every ſpot where he had once wandered with the companion of his childhood. He traced the path by which ſhe had gone to intercede for the ſlave of the Black River. He gazed again upon the banks of the Three Peaks, where ſhe had repoſed herſelf when unable to walk further, and upon that part of the wood where they loſt their way. All thoſe haunts, which recalled the inquietudes, the ſports, the repaſts, the benevolence of her he loved, the river of the Sloping Mountain, my houſe, the neighbouring caſcade, the papaw-tree

ſhe

ſhe had planted, the moſſy downs where ſhe loved to run, the openings of the foreſt where ſhe uſed to ſing, called forth ſucceſſively the tears of hopeleſs paſſion; and thoſe very echoes which had ſo often reſounded their mutual ſhouts of joy, now only repeated thoſe accents of deſpair, "Virginia! Oh, my dear Virginia!"

While he led this ſavage and wandering life, his eyes became ſunk and hollow, his ſkin aſſumed a yellow tint, and his health rapidly decayed. Convinced that preſent ſufferings are rendered more acute by the bitter recollection of paſt pleaſures, and that the paſſions gather ſtrength in ſolitude, I reſolved to tear my unfortunate friend from thoſe ſcenes which recalled the remembrance of his loſs, and to lead him to a more buſy part of the iſland. With this view I conducted him to the inhabited heights of Williams, which he had never viſited, and where agriculture and commerce ever occaſioned much buſtle and variety. A crowd of carpenters were employed in hewing down the trees, while others were ſawing planks. Carriages were paſſing and repaſſing on the roads. Numerous herds of oxen and troops of horſes were feeding on thoſe ample meadows, over which a number of habitations were ſcattered. On many ſpots the elevation of the ſoil was favourable

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to the culture of European trees: ripe corn waved its yellow ſheaves upon the plains; ſtrawberry plants flouriſhed in the openings of the woods, and hedges of roſe-buſhes along the roads. The freſhneſs of the air, by giving a tenſion to the nerves, was favourable to the Europeans. From thoſe heights, ſituated near the middle of the iſland, and ſurrounded by extenſive foreſts, you could neither diſcern Port-Louis, the church of the Shaddock-Grove, or any other object which could recall to Paul the remembrance of Virginia. Even the mountains, which appear of various ſhapes on the ſide of Port-Louis, preſent nothing to the eye from thoſe plains, but a long promontory, ſtretching itſelf in a ſtraight and perpendicular line, from whence ariſe lofty pyramids of rocks, on the ſummits of which the clouds repoſe.

To thoſe ſcenes I conducted Paul, and kept him continually in action, walking with him in rain and ſunſhine, night and day, and contriving that he ſhould loſe himſelf in the depths of foreſts, leading him over untilled grounds, and endeavouring, by violent fatigue, to divert his mind from its gloomy meditations, and change the courſe of his reflections, by his ignorance of the paths where we wandered. But the ſoul of a lover finds every where the traces of the object beloved. The night and the day, the calm

calm of ſolitude, and the tumult of crowds, time itſelf, while it caſts the ſhade of oblivion over ſo many other remembrances, in vain would tear that tender and ſacred recollection from the heart; which, like the needle when touched by the loadſtone, however it may have been forced into agitation, is no ſooner left to repoſe, than it turns to the pole by which it was attracted. When I inquired of Paul, while we wandered amidſt the plains of Williams, "Where are we now going?" He pointed to the north, and ſaid, "Yonder are our mountains; let us return."

Upon the whole, I found that every means I took to divert his melancholy was fruitleſs, and that no reſource was left but an attempt to combat his paſſion by the arguments which reaſon ſuggeſted. I anſwered him, "Yes, there are the mountains where once dwelt your beloved Virginia; and this is the picture you gave her, and which ſhe held when dying to her heart, that heart which even in her laſt moments only beat for you." I then gave Paul the little picture which he had given Virginia at the borders of the cocoa-tree fountain. At this ſight a gloomy joy overſpread his looks. He eagerly ſeized the picture with his feeble hands, and held it to his lips. His oppreſſed boſom ſeemed ready to burſt with

with emotion, and his eyes were filled with tears which had no power to flow.

"My ſon," ſaid I, "liſten to him who is your friend, who was the friend of Virginia, and who, in the bloom of your hopes, endeavoured to fortify your mind againſt the unforeſeen accidents of life. What do you deplore with ſo much bitterneſs? Your own misfortunes, or thoſe of Virginia? Your own misfortunes are indeed ſevere. You have loſt the moſt amiable of women; ſhe who ſacrificed her own intereſts to yours, who preferred you to all that fortune could beſtow, and conſidered you as the only recompenſe worthy of her virtues. But might not this very object, from whom you expected the pureſt happineſs, have proved to you a ſource of the moſt cruel diſtreſs? She had returned poor, diſinherited; and all you could henceforth have partaken with her was your labours; while rendered more delicate by her education, and more courageous by her misfortunes, you would have beheld her every day ſinking beneath her efforts to ſhare and ſoften your fatigues. Had ſhe brought you children, this would only have ſerved to increaſe her inquietudes and your own, from the difficulty of ſuſtaining your aged parents and your infant family. You will tell me there would have been reſerved to you an happineſs independent of fortune,

that of protecting a beloved object, which attaches itſelf to us in proportion to its helpleſſneſs; that your pains and ſufferings would have ſerved to endear you to each other, and that your paſſion would have gathered ſtrength from your mutual misfortunes. Undoubtedly, virtuous love can ſhed a charm over pleaſures which are thus mingled with bitterneſs. But Virginia is no more; yet thoſe perſons ſtill live, whom, next to yourſelf, ſhe held moſt dear; her mother, and your own, whom your inconſolable affliction is bending with ſorrow to the grave. Place your happineſs, as ſhe did hers, in affording them ſuccour. And why deplore the fate of Virginia? Virginia ſtill exiſts. There is, be aſſured, a region in which virtue receives its reward. Virginia now is happy. Ah! if, from the abode of angels, ſhe could tell you, as ſhe did when ſhe bid you farewell, 'O Paul! life is but a trial. I was faithful to the laws of nature, love, and virtue. Heaven found I had fulfilled my duties, and has ſnatched me for ever from all the miſeries I might have endured myſelf, and all I might have felt for the miſeries of others. I am placed above the reach of all human evils, and you pity me! I am become pure and unchangeable as a particle of light, and you would recall me to the darkneſs of human life! O, Paul! O, my beloved friend! recollect thoſe days

of

of happineſs, when in the morning we felt the delightful ſenſations excited by the unfolding beauties of nature; when we gazed upon the ſun gilding the peaks of thoſe rocks, and then ſpreading his rays over the boſom of the foreſts. How exquiſite were our emotions while we enjoyed the glowing colours of the opening day, the odours of our ſhrubs, the concerts of our birds! Now, at the ſource of beauty, from which flows all that is delightful upon earth, my ſoul intuitively ſees, taſtes, hears, touches, what before ſhe could only be made ſenſible of through the medium of our weak organs. Ah! what language can deſcribe thoſe ſhores of eternal bliſs which I inhabit for ever! All that infinite power and celeſtial bounty can confer, that harmony which reſults from friendſhip with numberleſs beings, exulting in the ſame felicity, we enjoy in unmixed perfection. Support then the trial which is allotted you, that you may heighten the happineſs of your Virginia by love which will know no termination, by hymeneals which will be immortal. There I will calm your regrets, I will wipe away your tears. Oh, my beloved friend! my huſband! raiſe your thoughts towards infinite duration, and bear the evils of a moment.'

My own emotion choaked my utterance. Paul, looking at me ſtedfaſtly, cried, "She is no more!

She is no more!" and a long fainting fit ſucceeded that melancholy exclamation. When reſtored to himſelf, he ſaid, "Since death is a good, and ſince Virginia is happy, I would die too, and be united to Virginia" Thus the motives of conſolation I had offered, only ſerved to nouriſh his deſpair. I was like a man who attempts to ſave a friend ſinking in the midſt of a flood, and refuſing to ſwim. Sorrow had overwhelmed his ſoul. Alas! the misfortunes of early years prepare man for the ſtruggles of life: but Paul had never known adverſity.

I led him back to his own dwelling, where I found his mother and Madame de la Tour in a ſtate of increaſed languor, but Margaret drooped moſt. Thoſe lively characters upon which light afflictions make a ſmall impreſſion are leaſt capable of reſiſting great calamities.

"Oh, my good friend," ſaid Margaret, methought laſt night I ſaw Virginia dreſſed in white, amidſt delicious bowers and gardens. She ſaid to me, I enjoy the moſt perfect happineſs; and then approaching Paul with a ſmiling air, ſhe bore him away. While I ſtruggled to retain my ſon, I felt that I myſelf was quitting the earth, and that I followed him with inexpreſſible delight. I then wiſhed to bid my friend farewell, when I ſaw ſhe was haſtening after me with Mary and Domingo. But

what

what ſeems moſt ſtrange is, that Madame de la Tour has this very night had a dream attended with the ſame circumſtances."

"My dear friend," I replied, "nothing I believe happens in this world without the permiſſion of God. Dreams ſometimes foretell the truth."

Madame de la Tour related to me her dream, which was exactly ſimilar; and, as I had never obſerved in either of thoſe perſons any propenſity to ſuperſtition, I was ſtruck with the ſingular coincidence of their dreams, which I had little doubt would be ſoon realized.

What I expected took place. Paul died two months after the death of his Virginia, whoſe name dwelt upon his lips even in his expiring moments. Eight days after the death of her ſon, Margaret ſaw her laſt hour approach with that ſerenity which virtue only can feel. She bade Madame de la Tour the moſt tender farewell, "in the hope," ſhe ſaid, "of a ſweet and eternal re-union." "Death is the moſt precious good," added ſhe, "and we ought to deſire it. If life be a puniſhment, we ſhould wiſh for its termination; if it be a trial, we ſhould be thankful that it is ſhort."

The governor took care of Domingo and Mary, who were no longer able to labour, and who ſurvived their

their miſtreſſes but a ſhort time. As for poor Fidèle, he pined to death at the period he loſt his maſter.

I conducted Madame de la Tour to my dwelling, and ſhe bore her calamities with elevated fortitude. She had endeavoured to comfort Paul and Margaret till their laſt moments, as if ſhe herſelf had no agonies to bear. When they were no more, ſhe uſed to talk of them as of beloved friends from whom ſhe was not diſtant. She ſurvived them but one month. Far from reproaching her aunt for thoſe afflictions ſhe had cauſed, her benign ſpirit prayed to God to pardon her, and to appeaſe that remorſe which the conſequences of her cruelty would probably awaken in her breaſt.

I heard, by ſucceſſive veſſels which arrived from Europe, that this unnatural relation, haunted by a troubled conſcience, accuſed herſelf continually of the untimely fate of her lovely niece, and the death of her mother, and became at intervals bereft of her reaſon. Her relations, whom ſhe hated, took the direction of her fortune, after ſhutting her up as a lunatic, though ſhe poſſeſſed ſufficient uſe of her reaſon to feel all the pangs of her dreadful ſituation, and died at length in agonies of deſpair.

The body of Paul was placed by the ſide of his Virginia, at the foot of the ſame ſhrubs; and on that

that hallowed ſpot the remains of their tender mothers and their faithful ſervants were laid. No marble covers the turf, no inſcription records their virtues; but their memory is engraven upon our hearts in characters which are indelible: and ſurely if thoſe pure ſpirits ſtill take an intereſt in what paſſes upon earth, they love to wander beneath the roofs of theſe dwellings, which are inhabited by induſtrious virtue, to conſole the poor who complain of their deſtiny, to cheriſh in the hearts of lovers the ſacred flame of fidelity, to inſpire a taſte for the bleſſings of nature, the love of labour, and the dread of riches.

The voice of the people, which is often ſilent with regard to thoſe monuments reared to flatter the pride of kings, has given to ſome parts of this iſland names which will immortalize the loſs of Virginia. Near the Iſle of Amber, in the midſt of ſand banks, is a ſpot called the Paſs of Saint-Geran, from the name of the veſſel which there periſhed. The extremity of that point of land, which is three leagues diſtant, and half covered by the waves, and which the Saint-Geran could not double on the night preceding the hurricane, is called the Cape of Misfortune; and before us, at the end of the valley, is the Bay of the Tomb, where Virginia was found buried in the ſand; as if the waves had ſought to

reſtore her corpſe to her family, that they might render it the laſt ſad duties on thoſe ſhores of which her innocence had been the ornament.

Ye faithful lovers, who were ſo tenderly united! unfortunate mothers! beloved family! thoſe woods which ſheltered you with their foliage, thoſe fountains which flowed for you, thoſe hillocks upon which you repoſed, ſtill deplore your loſs! No one has ſince preſumed to cultivate that deſolated ground, or repair thoſe fallen huts. Your goats are become wild, your orchards are deſtroyed, your birds are fled, and nothing is heard but the cry of the ſparrow-hawk, who ſkims around the valley of rocks. As for myſelf, ſince I behold you no more, I am like a father bereft of his children, like a traveller who wanders over the earth deſolate and alone."

In ſaying thoſe words, the good old man retired ſhedding tears, and mine had often flowed during this melancholy narration.

THE END.